BRITISH WRITERS AND WRITING TODAY

Saturday Review

MAY 7, 1955 / 20¢

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The Lord Mayor of London rides again today!

IT'S really rather fitting that the words, "Good show!" should be the heartiest British expression of approval. For the people of Britain dearly love showmanship and ceremonial.

Their genius for pageantry in the grand manner has made November 9th a red-and-gold-letter day on London's traditional calendar. Then, escorted by liveried Pikemen, the Lord Mayor rides to the Law Courts in his superb gilt coach, to receive the Queen's assent to his election. A half-mile-long procession follows—with brilliant tableaux-on-wheels and rousing military bands.

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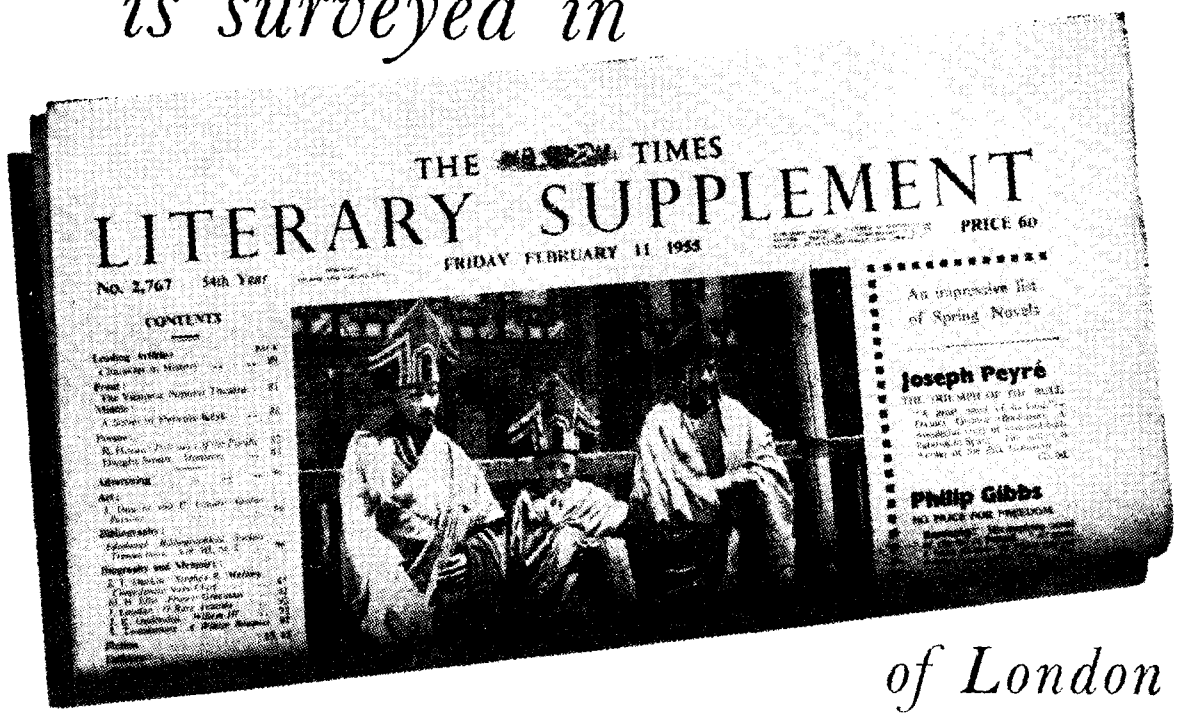

of London

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It brings the literature of a country under review when the literary activity of that country demands special attention. (The special number—120 pages in size—devoted to American literature was published in September last and was praised by almost every newspaper and magazine of importance throughout the United States.)

Additional special numbers are also regularly devoted to various branches of literature. For instance, religious and philosophical writing, children's books, and detective and thriller writing, were recently reviewed.

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Every now and then there comes a book which is like a blow to the solar plexus.

For me such a book is Robert Ruark's "Something of Value."

This is a long, violent, brutal, bloody, absorbing novel. It is not a book for elegant dilettantes who enjoy discussing literary amenities over the teacups; it is a book for people who are willing to admit that there are terrible things happening in the world of the 1950's, and who are not afraid to read about them in fast-moving fiction.

Curiously enough, this is "a man's book," which women are unable to put down.

"Something of Value" is about blacks and whites in Kenya in Africa. Its hunting scenes have some of the finest passages on the subject this side of Kilimanjaro.

It is also the story of the founding of Mau Mau, and it reveals the extremes of human depravity and derangement to which were brought those who espoused it and those who opposed it.

But, essentially, it is the story of *people*, black and white, enmeshed in a tragedy for which both were responsible, and from which no individual could emerge triumphant or unscathed.

"Something of Value" cannot be read lightly or dismissed casually. No reader can leave it unmoved or unchanged.

For this is a book that is not read, but lived.

L. L. Day
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

"Something of Value," by Robert Ruark, is published by Doubleday & Company, 575 Madison Avenue, New York 22, N. Y., and is the May selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. It contains 566 pages and sells for $5.00. Copies may be obtained from your own bookseller or from any of the 30 Doubleday Book Shops, including the one at 14 Wall Street in New York City.

(Advertisement)

The Saturday Review

MAY 7, 1955

Cover Drawing by Hewison, with Apologies to *Punch*

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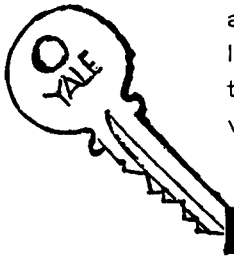

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The Man Who is Tired of London

By Thurman Price

"No, sir," said Dr. Johnson, when Boswell wondered if the "exquisite zest" he took in London might pale if it were his home, "*when a man is tired of London he is tired of life: for there is in London all that life can offer.*"

The opinion of one opinionated man, no doubt; but most Londoners still hold that opinion most firmly. And, oddly enough, so do a multitude of people whose birthplaces and loyalties are leagues away from the ancient city which the Romans called *Londinium.*

For London is an odd, nostalgic place, a city of a thousand faces. From the small and cosy pubs where the autumn mist seeps up from the Embankment along the cobbled alleys, to the swish and swank of Park Lane or Berkeley Square, London caters to every mood and every season.

And it does not take long for this stubbornly-planted old place to grasp your imagination. Suddenly there'll come a moment when you realize that Dr. Johnson was absolutely right—this city's life is infinite.

And though Shelley had the misfortune to think that "Hell is a city much like London," Masefield rebuts him with "London Town's a fine town, and London sights are rare."

Most people, you'll find, agree with Masefield and Dr. Johnson; most people are on London's side.

Yet through much of London's history, a journey there meant long months of sea passage, or at least a liver-shaking, days-long coach ride. Nowadays, however, we can get there overnight from New York, not only in comfort, but at astonishingly low cost. You can fly non-stop by Pan American's great roomy "Rainbow," for instance, at a Clipper* Tourist fare of only $290.

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TRADE Winds

THE ARRIVAL upon these shores of three important London publishers within the space of a single week provided an excellent opportunity, it seemed to me, to size up current trends and highlights of the British publishing picture, and then pass on the information to you.

This is what they told me:

Publisher Number One: Historians finally have discovered what Lord Godiva said to Lady Godiva when she returned from her famous ride. He was waiting at the door in a towering rage, and demanded, "Where exactly have you been? Your horse got home two hours ago!"

Publisher Number Two: "On the way to my hotel from Idlewild I decided to pick up a couple of American shirts, so I told my driver to stop at the first haberdashery he encountered. 'Yassuh,' said the driver, but when we were stopped by a red light inquired, 'What was dat you said, boss?' 'A haberdashery,' I repeated. 'Yassah,' he agreed again, 'a haberdashery it is.' We rattled along a couple of blocks and then he stopped once more. 'Lissen, boss,' he assured me. 'Wid me dey is no use beatin' round de bush. What is it you wants? Liquor—or women'?"

Publisher Number Three: "What's all this nonsense about the Yanks recapturing the flag? They'll fade when the hot weather sets in. Haven't got the pitching. Colorless blighters, what's more. I'd like to see Bucky Harris's team give them the *coup de grace*, what?"

A TRIP TO LONDON IS always a happy thing to contemplate, but, as a matter of fact, if it's an exhibition of English publishing and retail bookselling at its best that you're after it's not at all necessary to travel nearly that far.

Just cross the border into Canada. In Toronto, Montreal, and other Canadian cities you can find not only a complete display of English publications (side by side with books from the United States) but fixtures and window arrangements that are replicas of London originals. English dignity and American flamboyance are neatly blended.

Canadian librarians are conducting an experiment at this very moment that book people in the States are watching with great interest. It was the brainchild of a Canadian publisher in the first place, Claude Butler of Ambassador Books, Ltd., but the funds to permit a thorough testing of his scheme have been provided by the American Book Manufacturers' Institute.

Mr. Butler's praiseworthy aim is to encourage wide reading of good books amongst our six- to twelve-year-olds —and thus combat indirectly but substantially the growing menace of juvenile delinquency. "Reading is a habit," insists Butler, "and, like most habits, it becomes firmly entrenched when started young. Reading also is a solitary pastime as a rule, which doesn't enhance its popularity with young folks nowadays. They have a horror of solitude exceeded only by their elders."

With this in mind, Butler suggested that the public libraries, in cooperation with schools, offer special badges or medals to every child who joins a public library, reads six books, and passes a simple oral test given by the librarians. Kids are joiners by instinct and, furthermore, they love to wear badges. The only problem is to enlist their interest at the beginning.

Once they pass their first test a sec-

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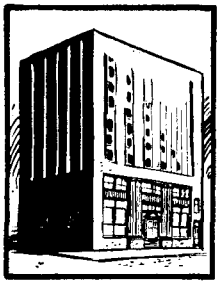

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NOBLE IN REASON

H. F. M. PRESCOTT
THE UNHURRYING CHASE

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CHRISTOPHER LANDON
A FLAG IN THE CITY

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POLITICS

SIR HAROLD NICOLSON
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JINNAH: CREATOR
OF PAKISTAN

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THE SATURDAY BOOK

ALLAN WADE
THE LETTERS OF
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AND HIS BROTHERS

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KENNETH TYNAN
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COMPOSITION WITH
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REFERENCE

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ond and more elaborate medal is to be bestowed upon completion of six more books—a bit more advanced this time, and four of them specifically non-fiction. All boys and girls who read and report on twenty-four books forthwith become members of the Library Advisory Committee, and are presented with an engraved certificate they can frame and hang upon their wall. The hope is that by this time they not only will have become confirmed book-lovers themselves, but will be ready and eager to preach the gospel to their companions.

The librarians at St. Catherine's, Canada, were not only the first but the most enthusiastic endorsers of the scheme, so it was decided they should have the chance to try it out.

WHY, I WONDERED, since it was the American book manufacturers who were providing the funds for the experiment, had no local library clamored for a similar opportunity? A New York librarian explained, "This is not as new an idea to American librarians as you have been led to believe. It's been tried here, not with badges and certificates, I admit, but with stars and other types of credit. Unfortunately, besides taking a very great deal of the time of already hard-pressed librarians, we discovered that it did not seem to lure new readers as we had hoped, but stimulated primarily the youngsters who already were regular patrons of our library. We'll be watching the St. Catherine's experiment closely, nevertheless. We hope it succeeds! Please believe that our librarians as a group are not afraid of new ideas, but are constantly trying them."

THE BOOKSELLER, English counterpart of our own *Publishers' Weekly,* features a jolly and informative column called "Behind the Lines." This column now seems launched upon a campaign to set down for posterity the favorite and most-often-repeated legends of the book trade. Its first nomination: the Bible verse alleged to have been spot-

ted in various bookshop windows around the globe that proclaims: "Holy Scripture, Writ Divine, sharply cut to six-and-nine. Satan trembles when he sees Bibles sold as cheap as these." Its second nomination: the cannibal chief in darkest Africa who chose his name from a list of British publishers and told his followers, "Me

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A Train of Powder, the current best-seller by **REBECCA WEST,** is the latest among the works of masters of the English language from across the seas which we at Viking have been privileged to bring to America. In the first year of our existence, we published Sylvia Townsend Warner's delightful *Lolly Willowes*; our lists have since included major works by such towering figures as D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce; forthcoming soon are new novels from Graham Greene and Rumer Godden, a new biography from Peter Quennell, as well as books from other distinguished writers already highly regarded for their fiction and non-fiction and still others, now approaching those ranks, in whose literary progress we hope to participate.

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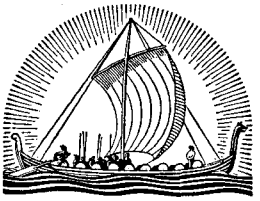

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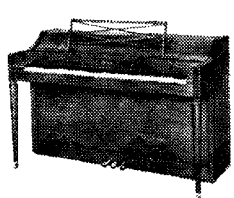

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no longer Chief Nubi. Me now Chief Oxford University Press." . . . How about the one concerning the lady working on her first novel who asked a publisher, "How long does the average novel run?" When he answered, "About 80,000 words," she cried happily, "Thank God! My book is finished!" And the even more venerable tale of the publisher who told a starving author, "I'd love to help you, but at the moment I find myself in an embarrassing predicament. All my funds are tied up in ready cash."

Another literary tid-bit I always liked was the retort the late Raymond Weaver made to the student who reproached him for not having read a current best seller. "You'd better hurry," she admonished. "It's been out for over three months." "Young lady," replied Weaver severely, "Have you read Dante's 'Divine Comedy'? No? You'd better hurry, too. It's been out for over 600 years." . . . Following the same line of thought, no less an authority than James "Schnozzola" Durante chimes in with, "Yes, folks, good writing lives through the ages. Savants is still quotin' my lines from 'Jumbo.' And look at 'War and Peace'! Two hundred years old, and three movie companies are fighting to make it. Tolstoy may be cold in Russia, but he's hot at Paramount and Todd-AO!" . . . .

A NEW REVIEWER HAS appeared upon the London scene who will bear watching. She signs herself "Jersey Lily," and her first efforts were devoted to appraising the merits of a book, published by the National Association for Mental Health, called "Do Cows Have Neuroses?" Miss Lily's review in its entirety read, "As a cow I did not find this book very helpful."

And at the British Broadcasting Company, vows Paul Porter, they have a category for documents more sacred even than those classified as "Top Secret." These ultra-precious papers are stamped "BBR": an abbreviation for "Burn Before Reading."

—Bennett Cerf.

Solution of last week's Kingsley Double-Crostic (No. 1101)

Vyvyan Holland:
SON OF OSCAR WILDE

Most parents in those days were far too solemn and pompous with their children, insisting on a vast amount of usually undeserved respect. My own father was quite different; he had so much of the child in his own nature that he delighted in playing our games.

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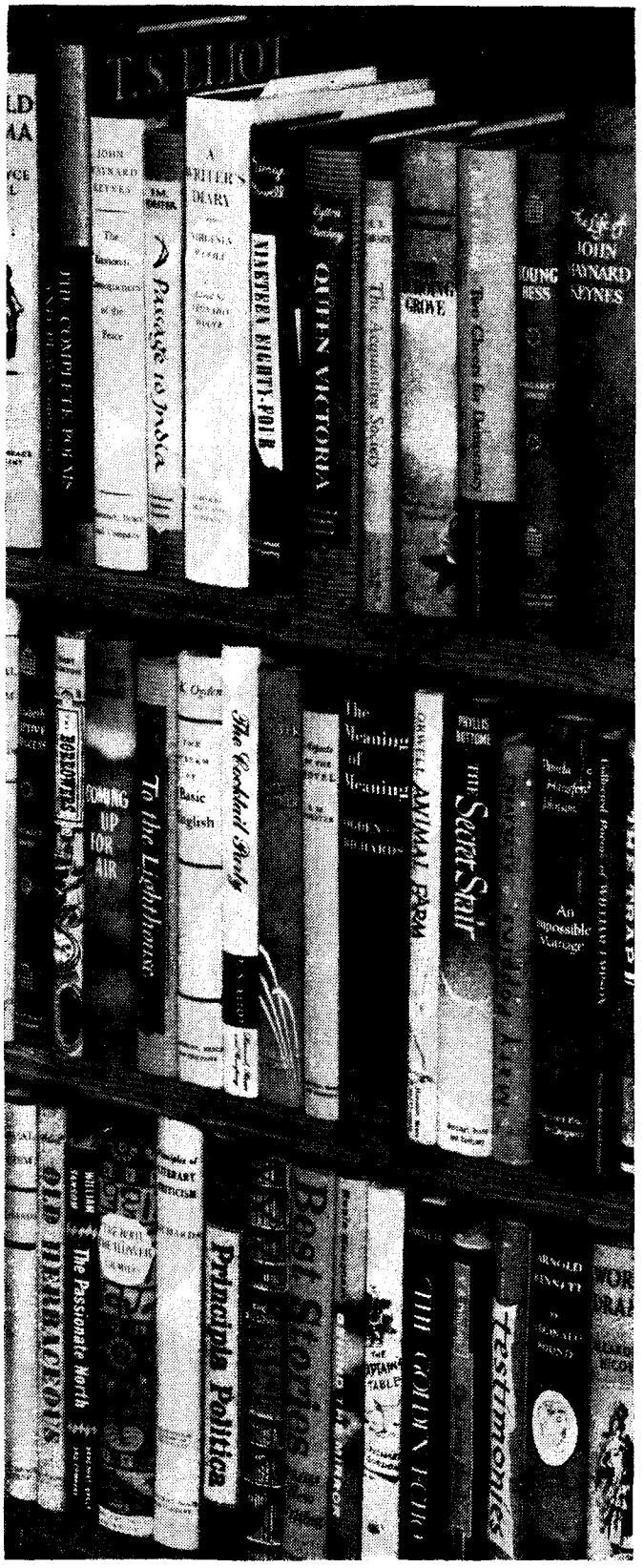

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Literary Sampler

PERHAPS KIPLING hit upon the answer when he wrote that "Allah created the English mad, the maddest of all mankind." Certainly their apparent lack of purpose combined with their curious knack for making a virtue out of necessity and for unexpectedly turning disasters into triumph has fascinated and exasperated in turn. Napoleon contemptuously called them a "nation of shopkeepers"; Hitler labeled them "decadents"; and Lenin considered them too immature and too illogical to be capable of absorbing the teachings of Marx. Fortunately, there were others who did not let frustration and exasperation dictate to their judgment. The late Walter Hines Page, U. S. Ambassador in London during the First World War, wrote to President Wilson in 1916; "Just when you'd like to hang them for their stupidity you become aware of such noble stuff in them that you thank God that they were your ancestors. And Europe would be a bloody slave-pen today but for them." And Sean O'Faolain gave it as his opinion that "between England and Revolution there will always stand an army of bowler hats."
—*Charles Roetter, in "Meet the British," by Emily Hahn, Charles Roetter, and Harford Thomas (David McKay).*

IN ENGLAND I was for the first time in my life really confined to civilization —in the old sense of the word. Barring some inconveniences, I liked it. If at times I grew hungry for spaces, I readily found that cultivated nature gave me freedom and joy. Life in an old English college is subject to certain formulas. Yet that life came to me to seem freer of rigidities than much American life, either in or out of a college. This sense of at-easeness, of freedom, is hard for me to explain. Perhaps it depends on the presence of a tolerance made modest by centuries of custom. I believe that it depends also on the absence of propaganda and other forms of controls that big business in America has come to exercise or to try to exercise on all mediums of expression—an unannounced but pervasive fascism, reaching down into primers for infants and up to popular magazines too holy to accept advertisements. The absence of sinister designs, like the absence of noise, contributes to peace of mind.

At any rate, while England gave me serenity and a sense of freedom, it gave me a more critical attitude towords life. I suppose this is a concomitant of civilization. Matthew Arnold defined poetry as "criticism of life."—*From "A Texan in England," by J. Frank Dobie (Little, Brown).*

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The Saturday Review

MAY 7, 1955

BRITISH WRITERS AND WRITING TODAY

A Survey of Activity in British Literature Since the End of World War II

TEN years ago today, during the small hours of the morning, in a plain red building that had once housed a trade school at Reims, France, General Eisenhower accepted unconditional surrender from the surviving heads of the shattered Nazi tyranny. Later in the day mechanics began tuning up the loudspeakers outside No. 10 Downing Street in London for an announcement. It came the following day, officially V-E Day, when Prime Minister Churchill told his countrymen: "We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing, but let us not forget for a moment the toils and efforts that lie ahead. . . . Advance, Britain!"

In the decade between that day and this Britain has advanced from one age into another. As H. C. Allen points out in a fine new book, "Great Britain and the United States," the British Empire has become a Commonwealth of Nations, in great degree independent and self-governing, held together by bonds largely mystical. The United Kingdom itself has repaired most of the crippling damage the war brought to its industrial plants and its peoples' homes. It has escaped the complete bankruptcy that seemed inevitable, but only through such expedients as the sale of a substantial proportion of its investments abroad to the United States and Canada. A socialist government has instituted many of the features of a welfare state and a Tory government has continued them.

To us Americans one of the most significant facts of the new age has been Britain's shifting relationship with our own country. If during the nineteenth century the United States traveled in the orbit of British economy and British foreign policy, in our own time the reverse has become increasingly true. The change has been reflected too in our cultural relations. Not many years ago Britons were wont, and with good reason, to describe American literature and culture as a colonial literature and culture. But last September the London *Times Literary Supplement*, in a special issue devoted to American writing, hailed its "independence and vigour" and spoke of "the passing of English influence."

The issue of *The Saturday Review* which you hold in your hands is an effort to examine the reverse side of the coin. Because of the differing purposes and audiences of the two publications we have not tried to produce an exact counterpart of the *TLS*'s excellent number. Our issue, surveying the British literary scene since the end of World War II, does not cover so many subjects, with such exhaustiveness as the *TLS*. It does treat, besides literature, the other aspects of cultural life with which *SR* is regularly concerned. The essays and articles are the work of Britons and Americans familiar with both countries, making possible meaningful comparisons.

The evidence this number offers is that, although American cultural life is now independent and vigorous, Britain's cultural life has by no means become subordinate to it. British literature and arts retain a unique vitality, and a capacity for independent new departures that are only just becoming apparent. They continue to offer Americans many qualities and values that we sorely need.

In the realm of politics and business understanding and open exchange between the two English-speaking nations are imperative if civilization as we know it is to survive. The same continuing, close cooperation is imperative in the realm of ideas, letters, and the arts.

—RAYMOND WALTERS, JR.

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ANGLO-AMERICAN COMMERCE IN IDEAS

By HERBERT AGAR

Herbert Agar is an American, a graduate of Columbia and Princeton, who has divided his adult life between the United States and Great Britain. For three years he was editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal *and for four years he served as Special Assistant to the American Ambassador at London. His "The People's Choice" won the Pulitzer Prize in history in 1933.*

ONE of the saddest facts about our diminished, and diminishing, society is that few authors and scholars are able to travel to meet their confrères and to exchange thoughts, perplexities, the latest problems of research, the latest excitements in the arts; few are able, by having fun with their fellow experts, to learn to enjoy each other's company as well as to respect each other's work. The whole of Europe is cramped by currency restrictions—especially dollar restrictions—and must continue to be cramped for years, even if President Eisenhower enforces his wise trade policies.

Europe is also cramped by the strange American fear that if someone who thinks us all wrong, on all points, should be able to squeeze himself into our country, we should therefore find ourselves weakened in our faith or in our patriotism. It may be a good idea to keep horror-comics from our children; but does it follow that we should keep anti-American arguments from our adults? Aren't we old enough, yet, to hear why Communists think we are outmoded, why *neutralistes* fear us, why many Indians offer the chilling comment that we may all be mad, on both sides of the Curtain?

I am a passionate Westerner—let us say this is mere prejudice. I am also a passionate American—let us say this, too, is prejudice, although it is not "mere." But I find it hard to recognize my America, as part of my West, when she behaves as if she were scared of ideas. What are we, and who are we, if we don't believe in the free market for ideas, if we don't believe that we must win in such a market—not because we silence or exclude the dissidents but because our case, however imperfect, is better than theirs?

Talleyrand remarked that "non-intervention" was just a long way of saying "intervention." Are we sure that "security"—that hate-ridden word—is not just a short way of saying "insecurity"? Are we sure that even in the most dangerous fields of science we are stronger, freer, wiser for putting knowledge, the last refuge of internationalism, behind barbed wire?

In any case, here we are in our self-made trap. Tariffs and visa-restrictions: between them, they do the utmost to keep our friends in Europe from knowing our lovely, exciting country. (They keep our enemies from knowing it, too; but isn't that just as bad—assuming it is half as attractive as we think?) Admittedly these restrictions don't prevent Americans from going abroad; but that isn't the point. Just at the moment when Europe, belatedly, admits that American life, American history must be known by any author, any man of science, any politician who cares to take part in the future—at that point the doors bang shut. Currency (which means our tariffs) or the visa (which means our unworthy fears)—one or the other excludes the inquiring European from our shores.

I have of course begun by putting our worst foot forward. Luckily, America is far more than her commercial and political fears. She is also generous, magnanimous, ashamed of the fright which dishonors her heritage. While erecting a high-tariff, red-tape, fingerprint Curtain with her right hand, she does her best to lower it with her left. And she is grateful, I believe, to any friendly agencies, foreign or domestic, official or private, which help her to lower the Curtain gracefully—without admitting that it exists, or at any rate that it is disgraceful.

The history of freedom (sporadic, tragic, but much-loved) is in large part the history of man's ingenuity in frustrating the foolishness of Government. Nobody knew this better than our ancestors in the eighteenth century, who gave us a Constitution beautifully designed to prevent Government from doing too much governing. World wars (beginning with Napoleon) and world revolutions (again beginning with the French) have made necessary a lot more Government than we like. But we are still rebels. We still feel there must be some way of doing what we know is right, no matter how sternly the day-to-day drift of history may seem to demand what we know is wrong. This "we" includes, of course, the Congress of the United States, which represents us faithfully by erecting the Curtain with one hand and poking holes in it with the other.

Let me describe some of these agreeable holes, none of which could exist without the permission of the Congress. (But in passing let me also mourn the world of my youth, when you didn't need anybody's permission to do the decent thing. "Or the indecent thing?"—yes, of course; but cannot Government be indecent, too?)

AFTER the First World War there was an unseemly wrangle as to who owed what to whom as a result of the sale of surplus war material belonging to many allies, or ex-allies, in many countries. After the Second World War the wrangle might have been interminable and pernicious had not Senator William Fulbright of Arkansas secured the consent of Congress to one of the wisest acts of modern times. In effect, and with many sensible qualifications, the Congress declared that the money accruing to the United States from such sales should remain in the country where the sale took place, and that for a trial period it might be used to finance a year abroad for American professors and research students, and that it might also be used to pay the cost of travel for foreign professors or research students who were offered chairs or fellowships in American colleges or universities.

That sounds complicated enough;

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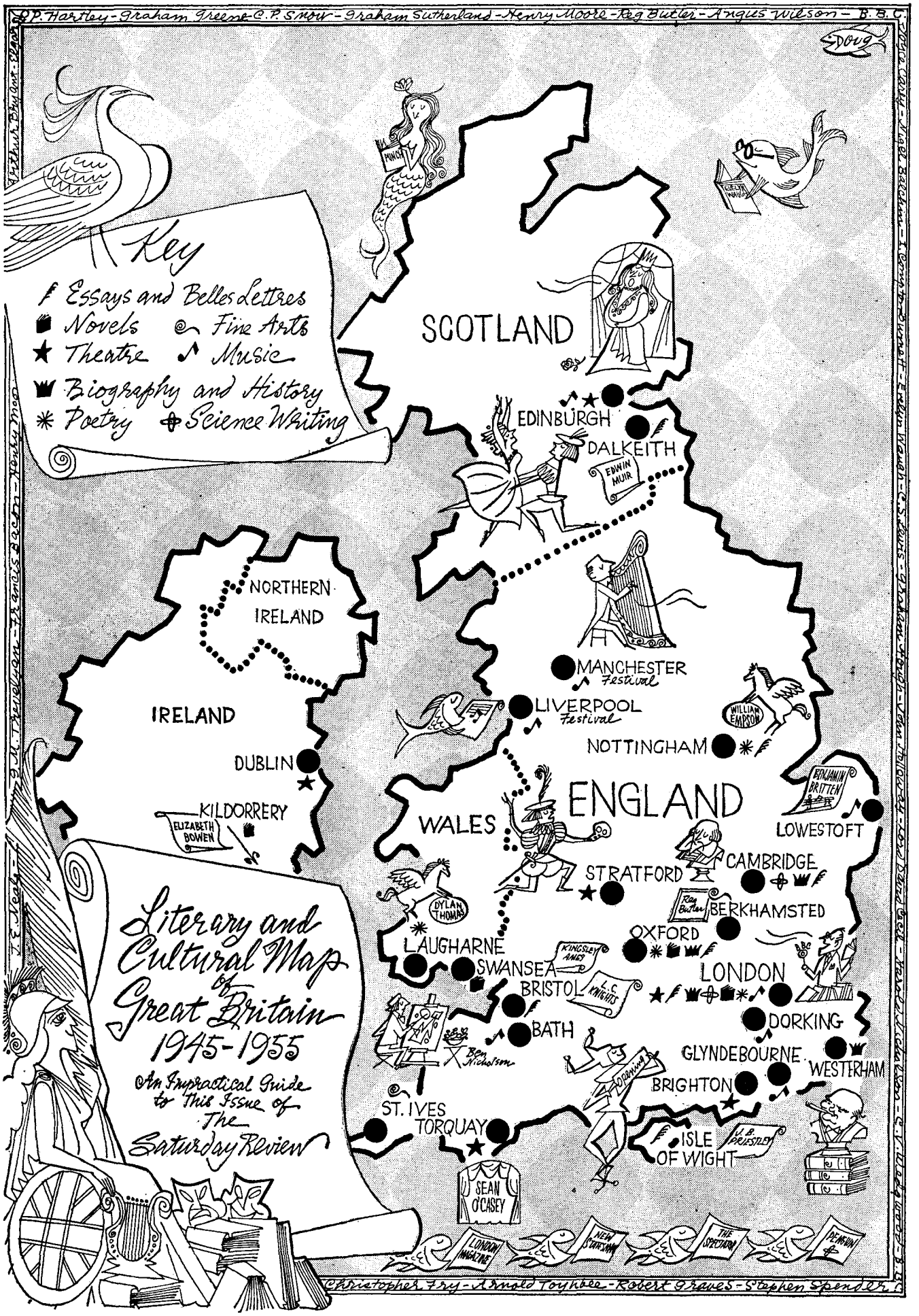

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but when it comes to administering such funds the complications are indescribable. This money came in the first place from American taxpayers; therefore, the Government of the United States is deeply involved. This is also (temporarily at least) frozen currency; therefore the Government of each country where Fulbright funds exist is also involved. And the money will be wasted unless the best professors, the best research students, pass both ways across the Atlantic or the Pacific.

There is no hope of finding the best men and women, both ways, unless many experts in science and the humanities give their time to making sure that the best are found. Thus government departments and national legislatures, voluntary selection boards under the supervision of governments, heads and deans of colleges and universities must cooperate in a three-way traffic of information, permissions, visas, etc. This sounds impossible. Yet it has proved a superb success—another tribute to man's capacity to do what is clearly needed in spite of himself.

WHEN I was honored by being asked to be one of the American members of the Fulbright Commission in London—which deals with the two-way traffic between America and Great Britain and her colonies—I naturally accepted. Who could refuse to serve such a noble plan, which cuts straight across the ignobility of our times? But it never occurred to me that the plan would work. I had served our Government twice in my life. And I had spent many years among professors, and even more years working with voluntary citizens' committees. The idea that a vast enterprise involving such disparate groups and subject at all times to legislative scrutiny could work efficiently seemed to me a romantic but pleasing fantasy. Yet it has

(*Continued on page* 58)

Transatlantic Publishing Trends

LOOKING over the current publishing scene, we thought we spotted some significant changes taking place in the time-honored methods by which British and American houses buy and sell each other's books. But before putting them to paper we hied ourselves to the offices of a representative group of American publishers to see whether they had noticed them, too. Some of the answers were highly contradictory, but out of them all some trends emerge as clear-cut—and some trends which we (and perhaps you) thought were clear turn out not to be true at all. The publishers we questioned were: Donald Brace of Harcourt, Brace; John Farrar of Farrar, Straus; B. W. Huebsch of the Viking Press; William A. Koshland of Alfred A. Knopf; Wallace Meyer and Burroughs Mitchell of Charles Scribner's Sons, and J. Randall Williams of Macmillan. Here are the answers we got:

Have British publishers been coming to the U.S. more regularly in search of American books than they did before World War II? Yes. Most of the American publishers happily agree that the influx of British publishers has been steadily increasing. The facts they cite: there are at least ten British publishers looking around the U.S. right now; British houses, which at one time sent representatives here only once a year are now sending them twice a year, and the smaller British houses are following suit as best they can. The American publishers also note that nowadays the British representatives often turn out to be the top men (even the proprietors) of their firms, a fact which was not so often true before the last war. These British publishers, who once saw only a few friends, are now scouting the literary agencies as well as the publishing houses.

Have more American publishers been going to England in search of British books? No, there is no change. The London streets are full of American publishers, most agree, but it is doubtful that their number is any greater than it was before the last war. Such firms as Knopf are making more trips than they once did, but this is because they no longer maintain offices in London. In fact, many American publishers have only part-time representatives in London now. This lack of increase in the number of Americans in London may, however, be due to the fact that it is much easier for American publishers to canvass London than it is for the British to canvass the U.S. An American who has seen ten agents in London has seen them all, but book rights are much more scattered in New York and a British publisher has to see a great many agents.

Are British publishers issuing more American books than they once did and are American publishers issuing more British books? Possibly. Many American publishers feel that the British publishers have a greater respect for American books than they once did. The British, they say, are beginning to feel that American fiction has more vitality than does British fiction, and the Americans claim that many British lists are now dominated by American fiction. The exchange of non-fiction, with the exceptions of biography and *belles-lettres,* is, many Americans feel, increasing even more than the exchange of fiction. As an example of this belief, Mr. Farrar points out that a third of Farrar, Straus's list is also published in England, including in recent years non-fiction books which would once have been considered far too American for British tastes. Such houses as Harcourt, Brace, Knopf, Macmillan, and the Oxford University Press carry a large number of British books on their lists. In fact, Macmillan has a whopping average of more than 100 British books on its list every year, most of them non-fiction.

Do you foresee any changes in Anglo-American publishing relations in the near future? Yes, because of (*a*) the recent lifting of British monetary restrictions and (*b*) the new international copyright law which, it is hoped, will soon be ratified by all countries concerned.

(*a*) Under British monetary restrictions British publishers have until recently been limited to quotas based on the number of American books they were able to sell before the war, but with the lifting of these restrictions six months ago the British will now be able to import American books more freely.

(*b*) Up to now American publishers could import only 1,500 copies of any British book without endangering the copyright. But the new law if ratified will lift the 1,500-copy restriction and in this way books with limited appeal can be printed in England and allowed to reach their own level of sale in the U.S. above the 1,500-copy marks.

—JOHN HAVERSTICK.

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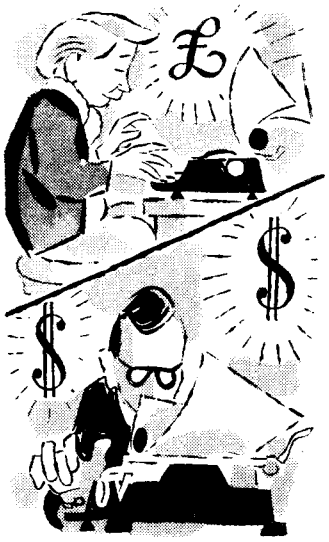
THE WRITER'S LEAN LIFE

By CYRIL CONNOLLY

Cyril Connolly, founder and editor of the literary review Horizon *during its short but brilliant career (1939-1950), is one of Britain's leading literary figures. At present he is a weekly contributor to the London* Sunday Times. *His books include a novel, "The Rock Pool" (1935), and several volumes of essays including "Ideas and Places (1953).*



IT IS still possible to make a modest living out of articles on the economic conditions of British writers. "Usual situation with radio and journalism slowly strangling literature which does not provide a living," I find in my March notebook—but then I was interviewing the blind author Tala Hussein, and we were referring to the conditions among young Arab writers in Cairo. I doubt if the situation is the least bit different in any country. In the United States both a commercial and a subsidized literature exist in an extreme form; there it is quite possible for a novelist to be turning out second-rate material for popular magazines unaware that another writer is being paid by some foundation for an esoteric critique of his earlier work. With the spread of thesis and subsidy this situation is gradually arising in England; on the other hand, the pattern of conformity versus starvation which is common in Communist countries and which began to cast a slight shadow over the writers' wartime activities has altogether receded.

At first sight the industry would appear to flourish. Two new magazines, Stephen Spender's *Encounter* and John Lehmann's *London Magazine,* are just over a year old after three years (1950-1953) of intellectual vacuum. Under its new editor, Malcolm Muggeridge, *Punch* welcomes the same kind of writer as these two in lighter vein, while the *New Statesman, Spectator, Observer, Sunday Times,* and several other serious weeklies are all booming. England still provides the finest selection in the world of superior train reading. On the air BBC's Third Programme remains the most intelligent feature of its kind in the world, and the nearest thing to a truly discerning and objective state patronage. A good broadcast, even on a very abstruse subject, which is repeated once and then published in the *Listener,* will bring in quite a pleasant sum (about $200) for the kind of work which would have received but nominal payment from some quarterly before the war. The Sunday papers and many other newspapers give more space to literary features, and a talented writer of short pieces like William Sansom, J. Maclaren Ross, or Wolf Mankowitz will be found popping up in the most unexpected places. Without doing anything really horrible or difficult a writer can quite easily earn a living but he cannot make money. And I believe the dignity of letters consists in making a profit and not merely in keeping alive, nor is the villain far to seek—Inland Revenue—Income Tax.

Many writers are temperamentally incapable of coping with their tax problems and have to employ accountants to demand the concessions (and there are many) to which they are entitled but there comes a moment when the accountants have to be faced too, and one longs for still another paternal man of affairs to mediate between us. The truth of the matter (this is seldom stated) is that artists should not pay income tax and that income tax is killing art. All payments made to artists should have a constant fraction—say a quarter (standard rate in Channel Islands)—deducted at source by those from whom they earn money and no form should ever be filled in. This should apply to all painters, writers, musicians, sculptors, actors, architects, and dancers. Income tax in its present hideous form is only twenty-five years old. One cannot imagine Shakespeare or Michelangelo worrying over it, Baudelaire trying to have Jean Duval put down as his secretary, or Flaubert claiming traveling expenses for his journeys to Paris. Every artist who pays income tax now has his life investigated by the state which destroys his privacy: he is always in arrears and therefore driven more and more to uncongenial work which often leads to a benefit performance just as pathetic as Joe Louis's last fight: he is entirely deprived of his irresponsible, piratical, and parasitic position in society. Dylan Thomas was driven nearly to distraction by this tax, according to John Arlott's obituary.

SO FAR we have said nothing about books. Here the conditions are deplorable. Books cost much more than they used to, but the reading public has not greatly increased. A young writer will not get more than 12 per cent on an average edition of three thousand copies, selling at half a guinea or twelve and sixpence. In other words, he is not likely to make more than $850 from it or to bring out more than two books a year. One firm which has recently been bought up is said not to have produced in all its lists a single book which sold more than this number. Many books sell much less and it is a hard job for an author to get an advance of a thousand dollars. In fact, it really does not pay to write books unless one has another occupation or produces a best seller which will have to be either a novel, a biography, or an adventure story and must be chosen (not just recommended) by American as well as English book societies and/or made into a film. And to be really profitable these best sellers should have come out before the

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last war! This does not prevent good books from being written, but it forces writers to turn more and more to journalism, reviewing, and broadcasting so that the activities which should be mere pastimes between books end by taking their place.

I have always thought that great writers should be among the great people of the world and have access to those who make history, and to the society around them. This seems to me an axiom where novelists are concerned; even Flaubert was the guest of the French Emperor; Dickens, Thackeray, Balzac, Stendhal, Tolstoy, Proust all moved in the best available society. Power and rank are two of the essential colors of the novelist's palette and there is a certain monotony about the production, however talented, of those who neglect them. Poets, too, have a natural affinity for the courts of princes. Now one of the effects of the leveling down of society and the general impoverishment of authors in this country is that very few ever make enough money to hold their own with the ruling classes. The artist is condemned to a petty-bourgeois existence. Has any novelist or poet access to the new court circles or even to the leaders of the Tory Party? Evelyn Waugh still remains the only novelist to deal with what used to be called "high life," for which he has put up with repeated accusations of snobbery. Novelists are students of character and love and both are best observed among those at the center of great events or who have the means and the leisure to indulge their passions. Even the palette of a Hemingway or a Malraux, who are quite uninterested in the great world, is out of reach of the British novelist who cannot afford big-game licenses, Far-Eastern revolutions, or even a few martinis on the Grand Canal. Maugham, Priestley, Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, Elizabeth Bowen, Joyce Cary thus control a richer field of experience than younger novelists, who too often can only describe the environment in which they earn their living, generally by teaching. Every year the campus throws a longer shadow.

LET us consider briefly the parallel activities. Since the introduction of the Third Programme broadcasting offers the writer the consolation of a well-paid highbrow magazine. He may either develop a lecture or construct a program. These programs when produced by poets are often extremely ambitious and some of those by Louis MacNeice, Dylan Thomas, and Henry Reed are original creations in a new art form. This form, however, is but a remote second cousin of literature and when such pieces are reprinted without their sound effects they can appear banal and vulgar. The microphone deforms what it diffuses. This is least true of the straightforward reading of poetry, and in literary criticism and the broadcasting of living poets the Third Programme performs an invaluable service which can be set against the derisory sales of contemporary verse on the book stalls. Television would seem in its present stage to be an unsatisfactory medium for a serious writer though sometimes able to popularize his personality. Journalism, in all its many forms, is the evil we know best. The writer's problem is simple—use or be used! How to produce articles which he can reprint or, failing that, which enlarge his knowledge without taking too much toll of his powers. A good price for an article or a long book review now averages from $60 to $75 so that one of these a week would supply an income of $2,800 a year with plenty of time for work on the great book, which may bring in another $1,400. But in terms of real spending money this is very little and it takes very few book reviews to prevent one finishing a book.

And here I will mention one painful fact and not allude to it again. It is the executives with expense accounts, the publishers, editors, special correspondents, and columnists—not the critics, poets, novelists, and men of letters—who constitute today (except for a few old lions) the aristocracy of literature. They give the luncheons in the good restaurants, throw the parties, obtain the foreign currency, winter abroad, and visit the great houses which they are incompetent to describe, while the novelist is lecturing on George Eliot in Nottingham and the poet drinking coffee in the Brompton Road. The independent rentier-author whose small private income fostered our greatest literature from the late eighteenth century onward is now a thing of the past.

Professors get no expense accounts but long holidays which generally they cannot afford and devote to teaching. In the Thirties many poets went from college to teach at a boys' school. Betjeman, Auden, Day Lewis were among the number and they maintained that the younger the class the less danger there was of confusing pedagogy with literature; they did indeed produce some of their best poetry there. Today the pattern has changed and the new "red-brick" universities attract vigorous young writers to the provincial centers. (Kingsley Amis's satirical novel "Lucky Jim" is a product of this new school.) By and large, however, dons do not make successful authors (except of thrillers). The combination of teaching, talking, and dealing with increasing official business tends to desiccate, and I think the red-brick universities will turn out to provide a jumping-off ground for London rather than a permanent abode of literary talent.

THERE is also a certain amount of straightforward subsidy in the form of awards like those of Maugham and the Author's Society and grants from American foundations like the Bollingen. These last are of enormous help to those actively engaged on long and unprofitable research but guilt-producing and deleterious to those who merely feel they should be. Awards and prizes for books already published on the other hand are extremely stimulating. The best form of teaching is that which takes the young writer abroad.

We must also consider the overall situation. The ten years since the war have not been a period of expanding prosperity. They have been for us years of retrenchment, scarcity, political disappointment, and esthetic reaction. England has tended to be thrown back on her past, to exploit her culture and her charm. The realities of the Cold War discourage youthful socialism and literary experiment; there is no avant garde and no "new Elizabethans" either; it is an Augustan age without Augustans; a refined Alexandrianism would be a better term. There are plenty of young writers of talent; it is the glorious field for this talent which is lacking and which all the broadcasting, reviewing, teaching, and subsidies cannot provide. There is plenty of room at the

"Well darling, I've not actually READ it, but it's been a 'must' on my library list for almost as long as 'Paradise Lost' and 'The Brothers Karamazov'"

—London Daily Express *(Mar. 25, 1955).*

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bottom. The difficulty is to get up from there.

Here I think we must return to the central situation, the plight of the book trade. If it can really be made more profitable, and also more dignified and interesting, to write books than to do anything else, then the swing toward the better paid forms of intellectual dissipation will be halted. Here the authors are not wholly to blame. There are too many publishers, all with large overheads, expensive offices, and a staff very few of whom are genuine book lovers, while all are competing desperately to nobble a best seller and make their fortune. They all want the same book: after Everest, on mountain climbing; after Kon-Tiki, on the wonders of the deep, with a side bet on reprints of Zola or whatever copyright is running out. Everything is tried, yet the promising but unexciting beginnings of new authors have to be written off. Behind the publisher is the bottleneck of the average philistine bookseller who controls a monopoly of mediocrity which can be appreciated only by a brief visit to the perfumed jumble sale of calendars and stationery that passes as a bookstore in an

(*Continued on page* 63)

THE BRITISH NOVEL: LIVELY AS A CRICKET

By J. D. SCOTT

J. D. Scott, who here takes a look at the present-day English novel, is literary editor of The Spectator *of London. He is a native of Edinburgh and a graduate of its university. During World War II he was a civil service administrator in the Ministry of Aircraft Production. Mr. Scott is himself the author of three well-reviewed novels, including "The Margin" and "The Way to Glory."*

DURING the war, it seemed, everybody in Britain read novels, and few people wrote them. People read every kind of fiction publishers could produce. Eighteen-year-old Wrens struggled with "War and Peace" in blacked-out trains; Cabinet ministers relaxed with *Real Life Romances* left behind by the cleaners. But there were not many memorable new novels.

What has been happening since? In order to cut the answer down to size, I do not propose to write about those who were already celebrated before 1939 and who since 1945 have not either broken new ground or extended their influence. Space, indeed, forces me to interpret this rule as eliminating Joyce Cary and I. Compton-Burnett, who probably *have* extended their influence.

Among living novelists who are still in play under the rule Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene are the most notable. Neither, it is true, had much influence upon younger writers. Whom, indeed, could Mr. Waugh influence? He is Catholic and reactionary, and the most interesting younger writers are neither. Mr. Greene's case is different. His style, and one element in the content of his novels—the seediness, the nausée-for-the-suburbs, the powerful atmosphere of Greeneland—were influential, were indeed positively infectious in the late Thirties and the Forties, so that serious young writers nowadays are on their guard against them. They come up nowadays mainly in non-literary writing—in thrillers and travel books, for instance. But everything that those two writers do attracts attention, not only the attention of the greater reading public, but of younger writers, critics, cognoscenti, avant garde, intelligentsia, or whatever you call them.

Mr. Waugh and Mr. Greene are united not only in faith and in eminence; they are contemporaries; they were at Oxford at the same time; they published their first novels within a year of one another at the end of the Twenties, and in doing so they nudged the novel into a new kind of climate. Two other Oxford contemporaries helped in this effort. By writing his first novel while he was still at school Henry Green actually got in well ahead of any of the others. "Blindness" (1926) was a very odd book indeed for those days; elegant, affected, incomprehensibly elliptical, sad, but unsentimental, it was almost insultingly lacking in "appeal." It was, in fact, a book of the Thirties dropped into the world of Galsworthy and Walpole. Admirers have followed Henry Green through a series of enigmatic titles ("Living," "Caught," "Back," "Concluding," "Doting") in the succeeding thirty years, but it was still a coterie reputation when, in 1945, he published what is his best book to date, "Loving." "Loving" is a book of atmosphere, and the atmosphere is one of loving; as in all Mr. Green's books, there is a profound feeling of sexuality—brilliant, troubling, moving. The spoken word is rendered with an extraordinarily delicate accuracy; this, one feels in reading, is the very distilled essence of how these people speak, and therefore of what they are. Henry Green is perhaps something of a writers' writer, but if he is, he is nevertheless the novelist of whom Elizabeth Bowen has said that he *is* "nearer than any other to the spirit and what one might call the central nerve of our time."

Anthony Powell has affinities with both Evelyn Waugh and Henry Green. His books are social comedies (sometimes quite horribly funny) written (like Henry Green's) with a good deal of manner, which rather dates the prewar ones, but which, in his postwar work, has developed a Proustian richness, a little gooey sometimes but curiously effective. "A Question of Upbringing" (1951), "A Buyer's Market" (1952), and "The Acceptance World," just published, are parts of a long novel about young people growing up in the Twenties and Thirties. It is a brilliantly entertaining work, but it is also full of a touching English painfulness about youth and love and snobbery.

Snobbery: all four of these contemporaries (and one might add Christopher Isherwood if he were still an English novelist) have a keen

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sense of those social distinctions which are especially English: the characters wear the wrong old school tie (*e.g.* in "The Heart of the Matter") or talk with proletarian accents when trying to mix with proletarians (Isherwood's "Lions and Shadows"); or go shooting out of season (Green's "Pack My Bag"). This is very much in the tradition of the classic English novel; the important English novelists have generally recognized that class distinctions are among the most important—and comic novelists have recognized that they were the most comic—features of English life. But it is possible that an interest which seems quite proper to American readers of Thackeray or Edith Wharton seems unsympathetic in contemporary works.

It is convenient to group those writers and to associate them with a tradition; it gives us, if not a theme, at least a point of reference. To this point I want to refer two writers, both known before the war, who have established themselves in commanding positions since 1945. Both are "traditional" novelists, but there are differences between them which are interesting and which, in the future, may appear significant.

L. P. Hartley (who is perhaps unique among English writers mentioned here in acknowledging the special influence of an American master, Hawthorne) was known before the war mainly as a writer of short stories, but in 1944 he published "The Shrimp and the Anemone," which was followed in 1946 by "The Sixth Heaven" and in 1947 by "Eustace and Hilda." The Eustace trilogy has the appearance of being a very mild work, gently amusing (although at the same time very gripping); but really it is a tragedy, a formal Aristotelian tragedy, in which the hypochondriacal Eustace is a truly tragic hero, with a special virtue of moral perceptiveness, and a fatal weakness that he cannot apply this perceptiveness to his sister Hilda and see that her love for him is a possessive and baneful love. Mr. Hartley has written other books since then, but I think only one of them comes up to, and perhaps even surpasses, the standard of the Eustace trilogy. This is "The Go-Between" (1953), another book which is deceptively gentle, although perhaps not quite so deceptively gentle, but with the same kind of steel-jawed mantrap ending.

These novels of Mr. Hartley's, although they are tragedies, are also social comedies; in both there is some of the traditional, slightly cruel, or at least painful, fun about not doing the right things at country houses ("And Leo, you mustn't come down to breakfast in your slippers. It's the sort of thing that bank clerks do.") and characteristically and traditionally, this fun is had from the inside—although it is the hero who is being addressed in this quotation, the author himself knows about not coming down to breakfast in slippers, and you, the reader—*you* know, too.

There is nothing of this in the novels of C. P. Snow, whose latest novel, "The New Men," was the subject of a justly appreciative article in these columns on January 8. Mr. Snow's multi-volume novel "Strangers and Brothers" is an immensely ambitious work, nothing less than a portrait of a whole society from the Twenties to the present day. In being realist, moralist, compassionate, Mr. Snow stands in the central tradition of the English novel, but he is not much interested in the social comedy, in coming down to breakfast in slippers or not coming down to breakfast in slippers—about as little interested as, say, Dreiser. His theme is ambition; a deep and lasting craving for worldly success is at once the strength and weakness of his characters. Worldly success may include social success, yet there is in Mr. Snow's work a lack of interest in social minutiae as such which is the product of an important kind of negative originality (although he possesses also formidable positive powers) and which may, I think, give a pointer for the future.

THE writers who attracted and maintained attention between 1945 and 1955 are a mixed lot. It is interesting to note that one of the most remarkable among them, Angus Wilson ("The Wrong Set," 1949; "Hemlock and After," 1952), is highly traditional both in his subject matter and in his values. His books are generous helpings of the social comedy, the English-social-comedy ("Terry was the real public schoolboy with his monocle and calling Mrs. Lippiatt 'my dear lady' "), and his values are familiar, not to say old-fashioned. They are the liberal values, the values of Bloomsbury, the values, to be more particular, of E. M. Forster. What is

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THREE COMERS: Just about the most-laudatory, if not downright rhapsodic, adjectives in British literary criticism are being dusted off these days for the novels of Kingsley Amis, Iris Murdoch, and John Wain, a trio of authors who, because they all (a) went to Oxford, (b) write wittily, (c) teach, and (d) are around thirty or so, are often lumped together. To Amis-Murdoch-Wain nothing could be sillier, and the other day Amis, whose "Lucky Jim" has just won the Somerset Maugham Award for 1955, strode out of his English class at University College of Swansea, Wales, and said so. "I think it is very dangerous and stupid for a writer to bother with theories of 'the novel'—he should stick to *his* novel, not worry about whether he is socially conscious, or has taken due notice of Henry James, or is expressing his predicament as a Western intellectual," he began, in low gear. "He should avoid all that and if possible should also avoid generalizing about contemporary culture, the position of the artist, etc. Otherwise he may find himself turning into a publicist. For this reason," he went on, shifting into high, "I think that the references to myself, Wain, and Murdoch in the *Spectator* and one or two other places as forming some kind of movement is excellent publicity but otherwise (1) inaccurate: I think we are all doing different things and much as I admire W. and M. I should hate to think I had much in common with them beyond being (I hope) reasonably intelligent and straightforward; and (2) perhaps harmful as well: it is very difficult for a writer who is told he is part of a school to prevent himself from either trying to write as the school is supposed to write, or else breaking his neck to prove he is different." Before returning to his students Amis dropped W.-M.-A. and discussed pure Amis. He was born in London, went to St. John's College, and was a lieutenant during World War II. Another novel of his—"That Uncertain Feeling"—will appear in the fall. He has "Hates" and "Loves," with the "Hates" including Kafka, Rilke, and Proust, and the "Loves" Isherwood (pre-1945), Shaw (Irwin), and Pee Wee Russell (the jazz clarinetist). As for Miss Murdoch, whose "Under the Net" got top-hole reviews here last July, she was born in Dublin, attended Somerville College, and is currently a lecturer in philosophy at Oxford. Wain, the youngest of the lot (he was born in 1925 in the Five Towns, Staffordshire), attended St. John's, got a post as a lecturer in English at the University of Reading, and at the moment is in charge of "First Readings" on the BBC's Third Programme. His "Born in Captivity" was published here last year. When their novels appeared among us Yanks Amis, Murdoch, and Wain were not lumped *en masse*, a bit of discrimination that they rather fancied.

—BERNARD KALB.

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original about Mr. Wilson is his clear-sightedness and—to use an expression to which he himself has given sinister overtones—his Sense of Fun. Another writer who has attracted attention is P. H. Newby. (His books include "Journey to the Interior." 1945; "The Young May Moon," 1950, and "The Picnic at Sakkara," just published.) Mr. Newby's enigmatic and controversial talent is also in a tradition of the English novel, but it is a different tradition from that of the other writers mentioned here—a less cerebral tradition in which D. H. Lawrence and Emily Brontë and Melville have played their parts. A somewhat similar note may be heard in the short stories of William Sansom. (Mr. Sansom has written better short stories than novels; this is true also of Julian Maclaren-Ross and Tom Hopkinson, both of whom have written outstanding stories since the war. I wrote some years ago, and repeat now as a reconsidered judgment, that Mr. Hopkinson's "Above the Snow-line"—published in his collection "The Transitory Venus" [1948]—is the finest short story to have appeared in England since the death of D. H. Lawrence.) But while one may make some comparisons, and suggest some affinities, the most remarkable thing about English fiction in this period has been its miscellaneity, its lack of coherence.

ONE might add a certain out-of-touchness. During this time, something happened to Britain; a welfare state was set up; a Labour Government carried through major political reforms, which a Conservative Government confirmed; the kaleidoscope of class got a push which set up a new pattern; the whole social climate changed. No one seemed to notice, particularly. The characteristic young novelist's novel would still be set in Florence or the Côte d'Azur, or in an Irish country house, or with the Italian partisans, or the International Brigade, or maybe even in the future. Comedy on the whole was out; intensity and culture were in; entertainment was rather frowned on, and "experimental writing" still approved of. The writers often gave the impression of living on capital accumulated either by Aldous Huxley or Elizabeth Bowen, and the Left Bank reviews of the Twenties, or else by W. H. Auden and the "socially conscious" writers of the Thirties.

Yet there was Orwell. Looming over all the estheticism and "social consciousness," over all the Twenties and Thirties stuff which lingered on into the Forties and Fifties, was a great writer who really understood what was happening to Britain: "The place

(*Continued on page* 46)

THE MUSE STILL LURES A LIVELY AND DIVERSE BAND

By LOUIS UNTERMEYER

No critic of poetry is better known to the American public than Louis Untermeyer, who has been writing about it and lecturing on it in all sections of the country for a quarter of a century. His "Modern English Poetry" is in its seventh edition, his "Modern American Poetry" in its eighth. A new anthology of British verse on which he has collaborated will be published later this year.

FOR the most part, the currents of recent British poetry have followed the same shifting, diverse, and diverting but generally progressive course as recent American poetry. The interrelated tendencies are suggested by the fact that the two most influential poets of the period crossed borders and changed countries as well as poetic affiliations. A little more than twenty years ago T. S. Eliot, born in St. Louis, Missouri, became a naturalized British subject, and, as if to maintain the cultural balance, a decade or so later W. H. Auden, born in York, England, became a citizen of the United States.

The two poets also changed techniques and attitudes as well as political positions. Eliot began as a satirist, malicious and mordant. His ironies, "tinkling among the teacups," excelled in portraits of incongruities—"Sweeney Among the Nightingales"; "Burbank with a Baedeker"; Prufrock afraid to eat a peach or disturb the universe; the anonymous, elegant Lady (Prufrock's feminine alter ego) spending her life serving tea and talking platitudes; the churchly "Hippopotamus" gathering in its dividends. But before he was awarded the Nobel Prize at sixty Eliot had established himself not only as the most serious but the most profoundly religious poet of his day.

Auden, on the other hand, made his debut with poems of social consciousness, moral responsibility, and unrelenting seriousness. "The Orators" and "Dance of Death," written when he was in his mid-twenties, are troubled with inward-turning meditations and agonized suspensions. But the work of Auden's late thirties and forties is an almost complete reversal; it juxtaposes an elevated tone and the echoes of a noble diction with staccato light verse, vaudeville tunes, and a free use of the vernacular, contrasting (and sometimes burlesquing) the old romantic dreams with the latest scientific findings.

Besides the contradictory influences of Eliot and Auden, there are other strains indicating the relationship between British and American poetry. Briefly united as "Imagists," the American Ezra Pound and the English D. H. Lawrence played important parts in the history of contemporary literature. Both men distrusted the democratic spirit and the society of their times. Pound saw the present through a distorting mirror of the past; Lawrence interpreted it in a fearful worship of "the hot blood's blindfold art." Both writers assailed current mores and broke down old taboos; moreover, they championed a new vocabulary which dissolved the difference between prose and poetry as well as the tenuous line between verse which talked and verse which sang.

LANGUAGE and subject matter changed radically and rapidly; the poet's attitude to his material evolved more uncertainly. As the world situation became more complicated, the poet's idiom became more complex; as communication grew more difficult and his audience shrank, his expression tended to draw inward, to seem more exclusive, even private. The poetry of the last twenty years is a kind of determined experiment, a new

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—By Jackson, from Punch (Dec. 1, 1954).

start. "The poet now is seeking to find and establish that central calm," wrote C. Day Lewis in "A Hope for Poetry," an essay written in 1934, "a point from which he may begin to work outward again; and in the process he is bound to be obscure, for he is talking to himself and to his friends—to that tiny, temporarily isolated unit with which communication is possible, with whom he can take a certain number of things for granted. This in itself is the first clue; when properly grasped it will lead us a long way towards the understanding of recent poetry. For in this poetry there is a perpetual interplay of private and public meaning."

AMONG the outstanding characteristics of recent British poetry is the degree of emphasis placed on intellect rather than on sentiment; even more than in American poetry sensibility has been substituted for the senses. Having learned their lessons from Eliot and Pound, such representative British poets as C. Day Lewis, Louis MacNeice, William Empson, and Stephen Spender, as well as the younger Dylan Thomas, George Barker, Henry Reed, and Sidney Keyes, obtain striking effects by parables and indirect allusions, by highly suggestive ambiguities and free associations. Many of them twist the patterns of ancient myths into fables of our own times; the central characters often turn out to be nothing more (or less) viable than symbols. There is reflected a continuing conflict between pervasive fear and anxious hope. In this struggle the direct and unabashed appeal to the emotions—the expression of intense personal feeling—has been, to a great extent, discarded or at least diminished in favor of studied impersonality, a clinical detachment. At the same time, the very recorders of what Auden calls the "intellectual disgrace" which "stares from every human face" grope toward "the palpable and obvious love of man" (Spender) in an effort to find affirmative answers, an opposition to the dehumanizing of life and the destruction of the spirit.

The development of the four poets who composed the so-called Oxford Group of the Thirties—W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Cecil Day Lewis, and Louis MacNeice—furnishes a warning, if not a moral, to those intent on convenient labels and pigeon-holes. It illustrates the absurdity of the imperative category which turns a group of writers into a Group Movement. Auden, as has been indicated, achieved so great a virtuosity that now he not only can do anything but does everything, fluctuating between a wistful religiosity and a chic diablerie, while his style becomes a mixture of the truly grand manner and what can only be called the Grand Opera manner.

Spender, on the other hand, moves toward a continually deeper self-searching which is also a self-hypnosis. His recently published "Collected Poems" is the greatest possible contrast to Auden's similarly entitled volume. Instead of Auden's brilliant interplay of wit and despair, Spender is almost wholly without humor but always full of hope. Naive, nervous, and often vague—he has been compared to both Shelley and Rilke—Spender writes with such personal if plodding honesty that his very integrity uplifts the sometimes awkward poetry.

C. Day Lewis, the most lightly versatile of the four, besides being a teacher is a novelist, and under the pseudonym of Nicholas Blake the author of closely written murder mysteries. Nevertheless, Lewis's poetry has not deteriorated. On the contrary, it has attained solidity of narrative and a compactness which was barely suggested in the passionately propagandist "The Magnetic Mountain," "A Time to Dance," and his other collections of the Thirties. Lewis's growth is at once apparent by a comparison between such a good if early poem as "Nearing Again the Legendary Isle" and such later and better poems as "When They Have Lost," "Newsreel," and "Bombers."

Louis MacNeice's idiom was a sort of cynical or nonchalant heroism disguised as common sense. Today it is still muffled in shrugging skepticism. But, as with Lewis, the poetic growth is obvious. The purposefully drab and sorrowful "The British Museum Reading Room" and the grimly graphic "Birmingham" (poems of his early pictorial period) are succeeded by such far more imaginative poems as "Brother Fire" and "Jehu."

OF THE younger poets the late Dylan Thomas is unquestionably the most powerful as well as the most sensational. By the time he was twenty-one Thomas had erupted upon the scene with a burning violence of emotion and an unmatched vehemence of diction. In a tragically short life he recorded his "individual struggle from darkness toward some measure of light" in a language so genuinely impassioned, so buoyantly persuasive that, though intemperate in pitch, it is exuberantly irresistible. Thomas stems from no one except, perhaps, the Welsh bards and Hopkins with his crowded, mind-filling images and his rapid, mouth-filling alliterations. In lines like "The force that through the green fuse drives the flower" and "She would lie dumb and deep, and need no druid of her broken body" alliteration acquires a new intention and achieves unprecedented intensity. Although most of Thomas's prose lacks the magic of poems like "Fern Hill," there is constant enchantment in that dramatized chronicle of a village day and night, "Under Milk Wood."

The influence of William Empson is rather special, but it is pronounced. Under his strict regimen a "school" of poets developed in Cambridge. The two most noteworthy products are Kathleen Raine and Empson's American disciple, Richard Eberhart. The manner is intellectual, complicated but unimpassioned; there is some emotion but practically no

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music. The result is an expression which is difficult, dry, and a bit disdainful; but, if the reader is willing to work patiently, Empson will reward him with such poems as "Missing Dates," "To an Old Lady" and "This Last Pain."

Besides Wilfred Owen, Robert Graves is one of the few "war poets" of the First World War whose reputation survived the Second. Graves's early poetry is light and lyrical but his later work is predominately, sometimes heavily, thoughtful. It is largely motivated by the myths which Graves has studied so assiduously and recreated so brilliantly. In common with Empson and other contemporary cerebralists, his later verse has abjured melody, as though to imply that poetry which sings and soars is démodé or otherwise in bad taste. At the same time there is no gainsaying the charming naughtiness of "Down, Wanton, Down!," the wry humor of "Ogres and Pygmies," the exhilaration of "Trudge, Body," and "The Climate of Thought."

Almost wholly unknown in America are two remarkable unEnglish poets: the Scottish Hugh McDiarmid (a pseudonym for Christopher Murray Grieve) and the Irish Patrick Kavanagh. Much of McDiarmid is politically provocative, as is evidenced in such a protest as "Fascists, You Have Killed My Comrades" and the two "Hymns to Lenin." But the best of his work is in broad Scots, usually in need of a glossary but which, even without translation, burns through such books as "A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle," "Penny Wheep," and "Stony Limits." At first glance Kavanagh seems wilfully irresponsible, but his is a pure and purposeful native spirit. It is genuine whimsicality, not a cultivated Irishry, which infuses "Father Mat," "The Great Hunger," and the mock-pathetic "Pegasus" with a grave gusto.

Somewhat better known but not yet fully recognized, Henry Reed fashions an idiom, alternately playful and poignant, out of incongruities. He makes the routine event seem remarkable and gives old legends contemporary significance. In "Lessons of the War," Reed's most widely quoted poem, he alternates the matter-of-fact instructions of the Manual of Arms with the indestructible beauty of spring.

W. R. Rodgers is forthright and energetic, vigorous to the point of noisiness. Rodgers's earnest overemphasis recalls Hopkins, much to his own disadvantage, especially when Rodgers ties his poems with a ribbon of alliterative assonances like "Juts and jets jumpily" or "Gradually with

(*Continued on page 64*)

TV AND RADIO

BRITAIN FALLS FOR THE HUCKSTER

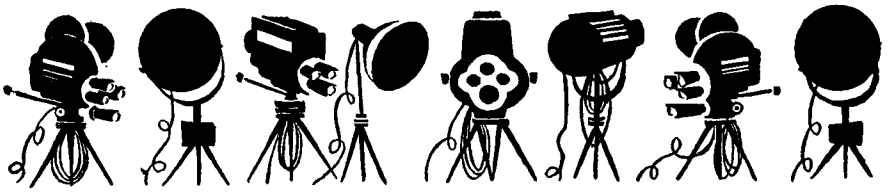
THREE things, the English say, are always good for the press in Great Britain—sex, religion, and the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). As of September 1955 there will be a fourth—the ITA (Independent Television Authority), the Conservative Party's answer to nearly thirty years of exclusive, non-sponsored broadcasting in the British Isles. The ITA was set up under the Television Act of 1954. It is a distinguished, disinterested facility-owning and licensing body whose powers of control over programs make our own Federal Communications Commission appear as ineffectual as a lone mother at an all-male, seven-year-old birthday party. The Authority has been charged by the Government with the difficult and sensitive job of introducing commercial TV to the British people. Its appointment, under the Act, is for an introductory period of ten years. Parliament will take a second look, in 1964, at this new alternative to the non-commercial BBC. Strong opposition and dire predictions were voiced by Clement Atlee's Labour Party during the debate on the bill in Commons; promises were made to revoke commercial TV should a Socialist Government be returned to power.

Off the record, however, a high official in the Labour Party is reported to have declared that such threats were rash. The first, fine, careless rapture of TV is over, this official said. The British working man wants bigger stars, better fights—for nothing. A Labour Government might add new restrictions to commercial TV (there are plenty now), but it would not dare abolish it—so the spokesman is quoted. Bread and circuses. Great Britain is "for it." London, Manchester, and Birmingham will have commercial TV in September. Scotland and Wales in the future.

The sun may never set on the ITA, but its career will have rough going from the start. The Socialist press is waiting to slam commercial TV. Even the solid, Conservative *Times* has enormous misgivings about it. The Television Act probably would have failed of passage in Parliament had it been voted on freely. But Sir Winston Churchill, Prime Minister then, made the vote a party matter, and the Conservatives put the bill through without enthusiasm. Generally, British opinion leaders are "scared stiff" of commercial TV.

They fear the "vulgarization and trivialization" of British television—*à la* America. The British public seems to have no crystalized opinion on the subject at the moment. British television viewers have known nothing but the BBC's one channel since TV began. They are extremely loyal to the BBC. Its most popular feature is the going-off-the-air hour between six and seven o'clock in the evening, when the children are put to bed. Now British heirs will be going to bed with commercial TV. The campaign for ITA was sparked in Parliament by two "back-benchers." They were supported by combinations of advertising agencies, potential sponsors, and theatrical interests. The Government rationale for commercial TV was the desirability of "some element of competition . . . in the expanding field of television . . ." The BBC's position and excellence were not questioned during the debate: its exclusive authority was challenged. The Government also argued that competition at home would stimulate British films and TV to produce better film programs for sale in expanding, overseas markets.

The commercial television that Britons will see in September over the new ITA channel will be "faster, slicker, timed better, and in the American pattern," according to one English producer. Schedules will be set up and adhered to, in sharp contrast with the BBC's traditional refusal to be bound by the clock or by slavish predictability. British commercial TV will be more lavish: it will boast bigger names, and treat an enormous amount of things that the BBC considers "infra-dig." A front-page love story, for example, which the BBC might consider bad taste to mention would turn up on the ITA channel. There will be no paid political or religious broadcasts. News (*Continued on page 52*)



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THE CRITIC AS CONVERSATIONALIST

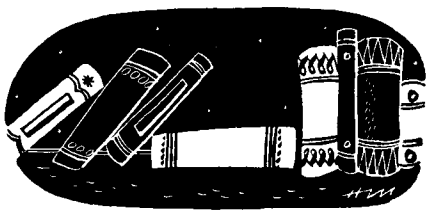
By DAVID DAICHES

David Daiches is a man whose background fits him ideally to take a transatlantic look. An Edinburgh and Oxford graduate, he taught at the University of Chicago and Cornell until 1951. Now he is lecturer in literature at Cambridge. His books include "Robert Louis Stevenson" (1951) and "A Century of the Essay" (1952).

WALTER PATER once said that all art aspires to the condition of music, and perhaps it can be said of English literary criticism that it always aspires to the condition of conversation. Most English critics are happiest when they are informal and discursive, and they have a natural suspicion both of a technical critical vocabulary and of any attempt to treat criticism as a science rather than an art. This is true in spite of the fact that it was in England, with the publication of I. A. Richards's "Principles of Literary Criticism" in 1924, that the modern attempt to establish scientific principles of critical appraisal and analysis began, and it was in England, too, that F. R. Leavis founded the periodical *Scrutiny*, which ran from 1932 until just the other day, devoted to the most searching discrimination between the good and the less good in English literature and to a bitter condemnation of the tradition of impressionist chat so dear to the English critic. Both Richards and Leavis have left their mark on English criticism, but it is significant that the so-called "New Criticism" in America owes more to both these critics than does any dominant school of criticism in England. Richards is in Harvard; and Leavis's embittered sense of isolation increases every day.

It is worth pausing at Leavis, because his relation to the English critical scene defines that scene with remarkable precision. His interest lies in *discrimination*, in sifting out the tiny number of first-rate literary works and holding fast to them, while rejecting anything less than the best. He has no use for the traditional English preference for the amateur note in criticism. The discursive elegance of *Times Literary Supplement* reviewers, the relaxed intelligence of V. S. Pritchett and Walter Allen in the *New Statesman*, the urbane and rather slack quality of the criticism in the recently founded *London Magazine*, the graceful, gentlemanly discourse of Lord David Cecil, the somewhat coy highbrowism of the BBC's Third Programme—all this he not only dislikes, but regards as a menace to civilization.

I have dwelt at some length on Leavis's sense of his own isolation and of his own missionary efforts in a decadent culture, not because he is the one great critical voice crying in the wilderness—I agree that at his best he is a great critic—but I think he exaggerates his isolation, for he has many followers, including secondary-school teachers who bring his doctrine into the classroom. His real interest for my present purpose lies in his challenge to the English view that stringent evaluative criticism is not as important in a culture as the writing, reading, and enjoying of books, the view that the critic plays agreeably on the surface of literary appreciation and by doing so reflects and communicates enjoyment rather than passes sentence. The criticism in English weeklies such as *The New Statesman* and *The Spectator* get the tone of the English mind extremely well. The cultivated Englishman wants to *talk about* literature rather than dissect it; such talk moves freely from biography to history to analysis and back again, mingling logical demonstration, historical fact, and autobiographical confession. Further, the English critic has always had a weakness for the competent minor writer, for Matthew Prior and Fanny Burney and Robert Surtees and Trollope, whose literary imagination does not achieve any significant new exploration of the human situation but who write agreeably and entertainingly. He sees such minor literature as a source of daily amusement and refreshment, and major literature as a source of emotional and intellectual satisfaction to be drawn on when one feels the need.



BUT while the general pattern of English criticism follows the relatively relaxed and discursive tradition of criticism tending towards conversation (though it must be added that each of these writers can assume a tone of brisk professionalism in dealing with specific points in, say, the structure of a novel), there are also in England today other schools of thought which pursue methods more comparable to those favored by the most important contemporary American critics. In Shakespeare criticism (which is perhaps a special case, for specialist scholars tend to dominate here on both sides of the Atlantic) the "School of Knights" represents an important original English development. It began in 1930, with the publication of L. C. Knights's book, "The Wheel of Fire," and Mr. Knights has followed this with a number of other books of Shakespeare criticism, of which the latest, "The Mutual Flame," dealing with the Sonnets and "The Phoenix and the Turtle," has just appeared. Mr. Knights believes that we should "regard each play as a visionary unit bound to obey none but its own self-imposed laws" and that the most significant feature of a play is the pattern of meaning that is woven by the implications of image and symbol as they recur throughout the work. He is often original and illuminating on Shakespeare's symbolism, and he has been responsible for some significant revaluations of some of the plays.

Maud Bodkin's "Archetypal Patterns in Poetry" (1934) helped to set a certain section of English criticism along lines similar to those followed by Knights, and many critics have used both anthropological and psychological tools in exploring the symbolic significance of poetry imagery. Here the difference between English and American criticism is slight.

Among the less relaxed and more intellectually complex English critics is William Empson, who has now settled into academic respectability as Professor of English at Nottingham. Empson's brilliance in playing with possible complexities of meaning in a literary work is acknowledged and

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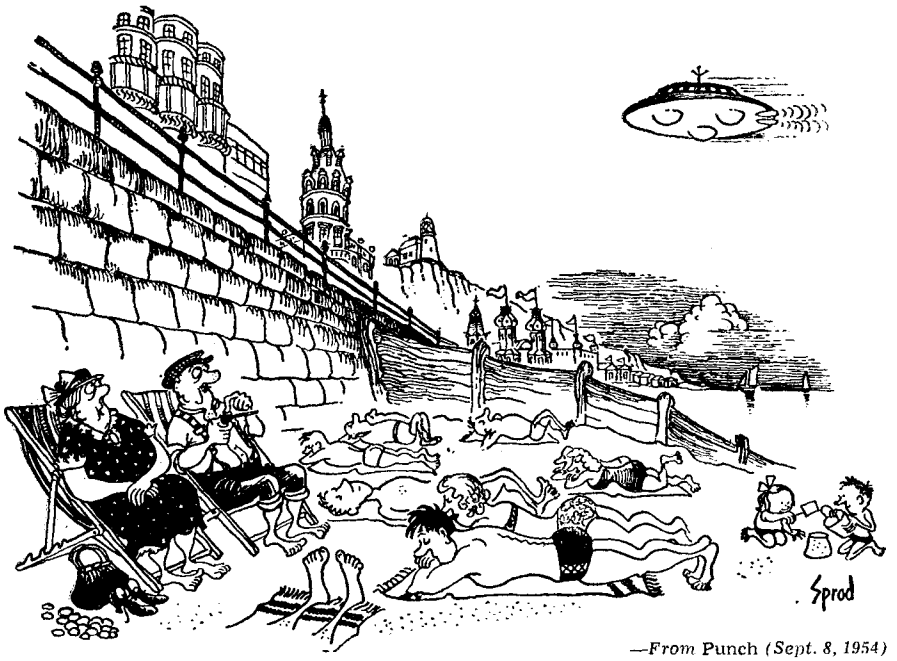

—*From* Punch *(Sept. 8, 1954)*

"Last year it was seaweed flies!"

sometimes even envied, but he is widely regarded as rash and even unsound in his interpretations. He remains a lively intellectual force playing on the periphery of English criticism.

IN ENGLAND the older type of scholar-critic exists side by side with new bibliographers, historians of ideas, neo-Christians, uncommitted wits, followers of Knights or Leavis, and bright young men anxious to form a school of their own but agreeing only on the two propositions that the Auden-Spender decade in the 1930s was a mess and Dylan Thomas is an overrated poet.

In Cambridge, for example, there is Leavis, off on his own; Basil Willey, with his main interest in the history of moral ideas; E. M. W. Tillyard, whose recent book on the English epic exemplifies the eclectic scholarship at which he is so adept; C. S. Lewis, recently arrived from Oxford as the first Professor of Mediaeval and Renaissance English, attracting large audiences with his lecture on medieval literature after a witty inaugural lecture in which he saw himself as a surviving member of an Old Western Culture which is now rapidly disappearing; and among the younger people Graham Hough, a "common-sense" critic of wit and urbanity whose critical talks have enlivened many a BBC program, and John Holloway, whose "Victorian Sage," a study of the techniques of Victorian prophecy, aroused respectful attention on its publication some two years ago.

In Oxford, where for the most part the critical scene is divided among the older kind of humane scholars and the polished essay writers, F. W. Bateson, a fluctuating and highly individual critic, runs the quarterly *Essays in Criticism* which grants hospitality to diverse points of view and is wildly uneven in its standards. Bateson's book on Wordsworth, with its emphasis on the incestuous feeling between William and Dorothy, has been fluttering the dovecotes recently.

Some of the liveliest criticism comes from the provincial universities; from J. C. Maxwell in Newcastle or from J. F. Danby, now Professor of English at Bangor, whose "Poets on Fortune's Hill" represented a new kind of sociological criticism of the Elizabethans. Donald Davie, who is now in Dublin, is an acute younger critic whose Refusal to Mourn the Death of Dylan Thomas has been fairly influential among his contemporaries. (It should be added, however, that that refusal —which is shared by the Leavites— is frequently and properly challenged at many levels.)

Among the remaining non-academic critics I have space to mention only Edwin Muir, one of the most sensitive and original critical minds in England today, now at last, in his late sixties, adequately appreciated both as critic and as poet; Herbert Read, more distinguished as an art critic than as a critic of literature, but still writing frequently on literary themes, acting as a middleman for new critical movements, particularly new interpretations of romanticism derived from modern psychological knowledge; Geoffrey Grigson, who edited *New Verse* in the 1930s and is now established as one of the most versatile and most independent of modern English critics; G. S. Fraser, who began as a leader of the short-lived "New Apocalypse" movement before the war and has developed into an interesting poet and a disciplined and thoughtful critic owing allegiance to no particular school. This is a partial and perhaps an arbitrary selection, inevitable in the circumstances. I might add that many of the poetic rebels of the Thirties are the respectable poets and critics of the Fifties, from Cecil Day Lewis, who is now Professor of Poetry at Oxford, to John Lehmann (editor of *The London Magazine*), who brought out in 1952 a collection of essays on modern literature, under the title "The Open Night," which are pleasantly discursive in the traditional English way, and Stephen Spender, whose "Creative Element" (a sort of counter-work to his prewar "Destructive Element") is a workmanlike job of exposition of ideas and visions in modern literature. Above all, there are still individualists in English criticism, and original or eccentric books, which fit into no general pattern, are still liable to come from one or other of the smaller publishing houses, the work of a recluse in a small country town.

OF belles-lettres in general in England today one can only say that, while there is not the store of "occasional" writing by leisured scholars and by young writers seeking to establish themselves as essayists that there was in the last century, there is still a considerable variety. Lawyers, generals, artists, clergymen, archeologists, politicians, and doctors still write their autobiographies. The best of these works are often written by one-book men, men who have never written before and who will almost certainly never write again. This is another illustration of the English preference for the amateur. Of the professionals one might mention (to pick out a few in very different fields) Neville Cardus, the greatest of all writers on cricket; Robert Graves, who still delights the public and enrages the scholars by his brilliant if highly eccentric variations on classical history and mythology; J. B. Priestley, who still chats in print about anything that occurs to him; Peter Quennell, the accomplished biographer; and Cyril Connolly, whose mandarin prose continues to please the consciously sophisticated and annoy the serious.

One final point: Radio in England has proved a strong competitor of the written prose discussion, and it looked at one time as though the BBC Talks Department would oust the written word altogether. It does not seem to be happening that way, however. Many of the talks appear later in print. For if the English tend to write as they talk, they also tend to talk as they write.

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BRITISH HUMOUR FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS

By STEPHEN POTTER

Stephen Potter, who has made such words as "ploy" and "oneupmanship" part of the American language, is the author of both serious books ("D. H. Lawrence, A First Study," "The Nonesuch Coleridge") and light books ("Lifemanship," "One-Upmanship," and "A Sense of Humour.") He wrote this essay just before returning to London after an American tour.

WHAT a rich subject—the post-war English humourous writers! Of course if I had such ordinary decent conveniences at my side as my notebooks and my own reference books I could give you a score of names; but these do not exist where I write these words, primitive New York City. At the moment I cannot think of one.

It seems impossible that I should ever forget the names of the comic writers we gloated over at the end of World War I and during the Twenties, when we were younger, and when Humour seemed younger too. The helpless laughter, the aching throat, as we read—ah, here comes a name now—the newest Ian Hay, "The Lighter Side of School Life" or "The Safety Match." Even to mention the title was to make one collapse. Surely there would never be a period in literary criticism, we felt, when these books would not be regarded as classics. Kipling may have been out of step, waving the flag of Empire, but surely no one could help laughing at his cockney seamen and his private soldiers on the booze. If Kipling's politics were too much for us we could join the hundreds of thousands enjoying the new kind of heroes in the novels of H. G. Wells, and laugh at, or rather laugh with, the troubles of the Ordinary Chap, the shop assistants, the small-time fellows, the Kippses and the Mr. Pollys. And all this was soon to lead, through the delicate Midland and Cockney humour of Arnold Bennett, to the shocking indelicacies, the thrilling audacities of early Huxley, to whom (so wonderfully amusingly) nothing was sacred. If of the novelists only Galsworthy was grim, of the essayists only Dean Inge looked solemn. Max Beerbohm was at his best, criticism was blossoming wittily with James Agate and Jack Squire. Light verse flourished.

—*From* Punch *(Oct. 27, 1954).*

"Good heavens, John! How long were you missing?"

More exactly to our point, the specifically "funny" writers, the comic essayists, seemed to have especial freshness. We looked for the initials EVOE and EVL (E. V. Knox and E. V. Lucas), for AAM and APH (A. A. Milne and A. P. Herbert). Reading some of them now, reading Milne, for instance, we find that his kind of joke has gone sour on us. "Four times up and down the lawn, and then pause to consider. It's really quite hot for mowing. And my two least favorite flies, Algernon and Edwina, are playing touch last round my forehead, not realizing that my ear is out of bounds as a hiding-place." No—that kind of writing doesn't quite work any more. Perhaps it was all part of the tone of voice of *Punch* of the Twenties.

Punch was the vehicle of the best and the worst comic essayists. And since *Punch* and English humour are bound closely together, *Punch* must be considered. First, a serious warning to American readers. Do not make the time-wasting mistake of comparing *Punch* and *The New Yorker*. Do not, above all, criticize *Punch* for not being *The New Yorker*. Function and public are totally different. *The New Yorker* (though one would scarcely believe it from its advertising) is for sophisticated urbanites. It is brilliantly contrived to please that public. London has no such illustrated comic journal. Its only *New Yorker* is *The New Yorker*, read by us, over two decades, with respectful and grateful pleasure. *Punch* has never tried sophistication. It is traditionally against experiment, against the new in Art, against the "Left" in thought. It has always been for the middle brow, middle and plus, of and for the middle class. The *Punch* public and the *Punch* policy are bound together, perhaps too inflexibly, by a profitable connection with client advertisers. The jokes are imbedded in pictures of good solid things like shoes and pipes, not expensive, but sound and lasting, like *Punch* itself. For *Punch* is sound, and it performs a useful function. At its best it presents the English middle class to itself with a sharpness of detail, in line drawing and text, which

—*Giles in* The Sunday London Express *(Mar. 20, 1955).*

"Florrie—did you say that as it is Mothers' Day your husband was going to cook lunch while you had a game?"

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makes it one of the most quotable documents in English social history.* There is no *Punch* in America, just as there is no *New Yorker* in England. The gap between *The New Yorker* and whatever journal could be said to be next in social level is enormous.

BUT English humour today is another story. While I have been writing, more of the names have come back to me. To take the comic writings, the professional entertainers, first. G. W. Stonier, H. F. Ellis, and Boothroyd, of *Punch,* are very pleasant, mild, and decently urbane. They give us light documentaries on the opening of the dog show, or the insides of a television-set factory. They show off the humours of the non-expert failing to be technical. Malcolm Muggridge, *Punch*'s new editor, has added a surprisingly sharp and welcome touch of bitters to these pages. Muggridge is himself an expert parodist, and has restored this most exact form of criticism to his columns, including effective parodies of the layout of contemporary newspapers and magazines.

The two best humourist writers, however, belong to the Sunday *Observer* and the monthly *Lilliput.* The man of the *Observer* is Paul Jennings; *Lilliput*'s man is Patrick Campbell, gigantic Irishman, scratch golfer, social wit, whose comic gift never splits the sides but always pleasantly entertains. He takes the line of "the awful things that happen to me," and his adventures are illustrated by one of our most brilliant satirists in line, Ronald Searle. Campbell suffers from a stammer. He describes how during two months on a psychoanalyst's couch he was able to retell his past life in a voice fluent and unhampered, only to find that he couldn't say "Thank you" when he got up. In the end the analyst was infected with a worse stammer than his patient:

"'You will probably find things easier soon,' said the analyst. The word 'find' very nearly choked him. In the end we waved at one another reassuringly, with the veins standing out on our foreheads, and then parted for good."

This "typical of my life" approach can be truly comic. It can also become degraded to a formula and a cliché. "It was gradually borne in on me" . . . "I felt pretty sheepish" . . . "It turned out I was being just a little bit over-

—From "The Female Approach," by Ronald Searle.

"One VOGUE, one ART AND INDUSTRY, one POND KEEPER AND AQUARIST, one HEALTH AND STRENGTH . . ."

optimistic"—phrases like this bear the sign "WARNING. DEAD HUMOURIST. READ NO FURTHER." They are not infrequent, I fear, with us.

But the fact is that for our English humour we don't turn so often to the official funny men as to the best satirical artists. The work of one of them, political cartoonist David Low, that "confounded little radical" as Churchill called him, is often reproduced in America. But I have never seen the great *Daily Express* pair, Osbert Lancaster and Giles, in this country. Every morning we turn to the *Express* front page "pocket cartoon"—usually a drawing of the dead-pan "Lady Littlehampton" being brassily tactless about current affairs. Inside will be a drawing by Giles, beautifully observant of the troubles of the $3,000-a-year man with a $15,000-sized family. Giles children are always horrible, always doing the wrong thing. At Christmas they always organize snowballing campaigns against the carol singers. Giles grandmothers are equally antisocial, black monuments of disapproval. A bad old tradition of sentimentalizing children (and grandmothers) has come to a happy end.

Where else do I look for humour in Britain? In the *Times* "third leaders," middle of the right-hand middle page. In the *Times* Parliamentary reports if Churchill has been up and has been answering back a misguided Opposition member who has been trying to answer *him* back.

Or I read Bernard Darwin on golf in *County Life.* Or the new, very young, almost too brilliant dramatic critic of the *Observer,* Kenneth Tynan, who, one must regret to say, makes some of his points by being personal.

We go to the theatre for our wit. We watch Noel Coward, brilliant just now in a sort of second youth-hood of cabaret, professional of professionals, the expert of experts. We listen to Terrence Rattigan, to us (but not, it seems, to you) the best of all our writers of comedy. We turn most often to humour incidental to other kinds of writing.

I think for me the most delightful humourist of my time is a poet. John Betjeman's subjects are entirely English, out-of-the-way and round-the-corner, as so much Englishness is. Small Gothic Revival railway stations on branch lines. Seaside resorts like Seaford, which are so haphazardly planned that they seem to back onto the sea, instead of facing it. It is almost a new kind of humour, the humour of place.

If I were to be so idiotic as to be nationalist-minded, I would say that on the whole, at the moment, the U.S. is one up on G.B. But I think what turns the scale is not the writing but an element in U.S. wit which needs a whole volume to describe. Briefly it is the freshness and crispness of a certain type of American talk—the "crackback" (if it is still so called over here). The conversation warfare into which I like to try to sail myself, even if defeat is inevitable. The standard of funniness is extraordinarily high.

*Let me add, here, another warning to American—and English—satirists. Our two countries are much better at satirizing themselves than they are at satirizing each other. The American satirizing the Englishman and the Englishman satirizing the American reach their corniest and most obvious depths. No Englishman can approach the ironic detail of a Damon Runyan or a Gluyas Williams when he writes of America. No USman satirizing the Englishness of the English can approach artists like "Fougass," or the deft genius of "Pont" illustrating the English way of life.

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BRITISH SCIENTISTS ALSO WRITE

By FRED HOYLE

Fred Hoyle is a Cambridge teacher whose ability to discuss science on the radio and through the printed word so that laymen can understand has won him a large following in Britain and this country. A series of talks on astronomy delivered on the BBC formed the basis of his book "The Nature of the Universe." More scholarly is his "Some Recent Researches in Solar Physics."

THE other day a London publisher told me some interesting facts about his business. Before the last war the demand for fiction greatly outweighed the demand for books of non-fiction, but since the war the gap has been steadily narrowing and by now he calculated that the profits that he was making (and of course his real interest lay here) came as much from non-fiction as from fiction. My informant's further analysis of how he made his profits is also worth mentioning. The contribution of fiction, he said, is almost wholly made up of a few outstandingly successful books, usually by well-known authors. In contrast, non-fiction has a contribution that is made up of a large number of comparatively small items.

Publishers in Britain have been rather slow to waken up to this situation, partly I think because too much importance is still attached to best-seller lists. The few outstanding novels show up well on these lists—novels like "The Cruel Sea" for instance—and this gives quite a false impression of the general picture. The best-seller lists do not bring out the failure of the average novel or the modest success of the average work of non-fiction.

Naturally quite a high proportion of non-fiction is concerned with science, and the general interest in science is undoubtedly a prime factor in the present situation. But there are other components besides. A general desire for information plays a big role in the present trend. I am told that any book giving reliable information on almost any subject is certain to be adequately subscribed. To take a few examples: books on bird-watching, on the origin of our sea coast, on how to climb rocks, on how to sail a dinghy, on carpentry in the home, and incredibly even on mathematics.

It can scarcely be doubted that these facts have some explanation, but there is no agreement on what this might be. Some think that the rise of interest in serious books is due to our improving standard of education. For myself I tend to doubt whether this is so. Rather does it seem as if the cause lies deeper. The world is changing rapidly today, very rapidly, and the driving force behind the changes comes, I suggest, from the acquisition of knowledge. The discovery of nuclear energy is a case in point. This is undoubtedly going to change man's economic life and his political associations. It is my belief that people have come to understand these points instinctively; they have realized that knowledge must be acquired if they are to understand how the face of the world is changing before them.

By a like token the decline of the novel can be explained. Present-day trends depend far less on the actions of particular individuals and I think it is for this reason that our interest in personal stories has declined. This is not to say that we have no longer any interest at all in personal stories. The works of Jane Austen are still popular and this is not just because of their historical value. Anyone today who could write as well as Jane Austen would be assured of success. But our interest in people, in the affairs of individual people, is no longer so great that we are willing to put up with a second-class literary product, as for instance we put up with second-class works of non-fiction.

I have been searching my mind for an historical parallel to the present-day situation, and I find that we have to go back as far as the fifth century B.C. Then, as now, the world was divided into two camps, the Greeks on one side and the Persians on the other. The names and stories of individuals flit through the pages of Herodotus but they are scarcely remembered. It is the great epic struggle between the two contending parties that stands out, and interspersed through the whole story is a vast store of information. Indeed so great is the amount of information that we must conclude that the Greek world of the fifth century B.C. had the same thirst for knowledge that we ourselves have today.

ALL this has a considerable relevance to science-writing, for it sets the background against which scientific writing must be judged. Such writing is not just a means of providing a number of writers with a livelihood. It is a social necessity, a part of our social situation. Yet there are many scientists who do not see the matter in this light. Writing about science in a way that can be understood by the lay reader is frowned on in many quarters, an unpleasant fact that all too often dissuades the scientist from expressing himself in anything but complicated and difficult language. We in Britain are seriously affected by this brand of snobbery but no worse than in other countries, and perhaps indeed we are better off than some.

The curious combination of the great demand for science-writing on the one hand and of sanctions against it on the other has led to various expedients being adopted. In Britain the tendency in the past has been for scientists to defer popular writing until their reputations as scientists

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became firmly established. The cases of Eddington and Jeans spring immediately to mind. With their reputations assured, such men were able to laugh at would-be detractors. Things have turned out somewhat differently in the United States. The unwillingness of professional scientists to write about their own specialities has caused a new profession to come into being, the profession of science-writer.

Since the war the taboo on popular writing by the research scientist has weakened, but this is not to say that it has become a negligible force. The present state of the taboo is that it allows a scientist to write an article about his work, say an article of 5,000 words for the Penguin "Science News" in Britain or for the *Scientific American* in the United States, but it still views with grave suspicion any attempt to write a full-length book.

IN ALL this we must not forget that the taboo is backed by some sound reasons—let me mention three of them in a descending order of importance.

Science is a cooperative effort; not even the greatest scientists could have made much progress without the help of others. It is very difficult to preserve this sense of a cooperative effort in a non-technical book. The writer may attempt, and I think he should attempt, to mention all who have made significant contributions to his subject. But if he does so he will only irritate the lay reader, who will be faced by a whole series of names that mean nothing to him, as for instance we find the Greek writers irritating with their long strings of names and genealogies. Or again the writer will find it difficult to keep his own work in perspective with that of his fellow scientists. The mere fact of his having written a book, of his name being brought to the attention of the public, may be sufficient to cause resentment among his fellow scientists. And the resentment is not entirely unfounded, for as I have already said science is above all a cooperative effort.

The second point is that science-writing is not easy. It takes a great deal of effort to express oneself clearly in non-technical language, so much so that the writing of a full-length book is certain to take a considerable amount of time and effort. And it may seriously be questioned whether anyone engaged on a serious piece of research work should allow himself to be so diverted.

Thirdly, from the scientists' point of view, even the best popular writing

(*Continued on page* 44)

SR GOES TO THE MOVIES

HARD LINES FOR THE BRITISH FILM

IT IS now just about a year since Britain's National Film Finance Company, a Governmental body, suddenly blew the whistle on British Lion, one of the oldest and—aside from the Rank organization—largest of the English movie companies. In 1948 the Finance Company had advanced £3,000,000 of taxpayers' money to keep the Lion alive. In June 1954 the Finance Company foreclosed when it became apparent that less than a third of the loan was collectable. Sir Alexander Korda, British Lion's venerable producer, was retired—and panic shook the entire industry. The effects of that panic are growing increasingly clear with each new English import to reach these shores.

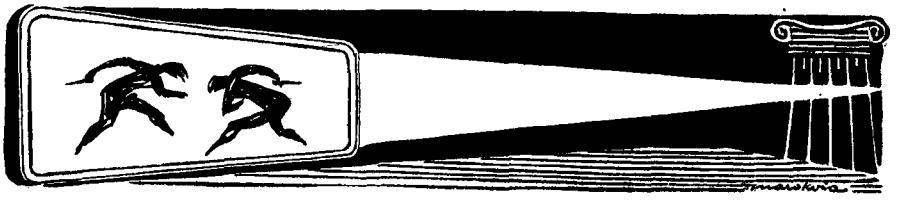
"The industry has come into the hands of the accountants," is the way Paul Rotha recently explained it. A distinguished documentary producer and former head of the BBC-TV film unit, Rotha added, "The freedom to make a film that you believe in just isn't there any longer. It takes a film person to look at a script and know how it will turn out on the screen. But the businessman has to be sure. He wants a successful play or novel to begin with, and at least two top star names to assure his investment. Today in Britain production is way down. If it weren't for television the employment situation in the studios would be terrifying. But that's hardly the concern of the accountants."

The National Film Finance Company came into being, ironically enough, to *encourage* British production. In 1948, despite the enormous prestige that British films had acquired, the studios were virtually empty. The Government correctly saw not only the prestige value of its films, however, but also the income that might be derived through taxes from a healthy industry—and, perhaps even more important, the danger that if England did not have a healthy film industry of her own her screens would soon be completely dominated by the perennially popular American product.

NFFC, endowed with £5,000,000, distributed its largesse beyond British Lion. One of its more promising ventures was John Grierson's Group Three set-up, organized to encourage through low-budgeted productions new ideas and new talent. In 1951 Rotha described it as "an opportunity that has long been awaited and, if it fails, may never come again." With nine films completed, Group Three has yet to score a single success or to produce a single significant new talent. Even Ealing, that early bulwark of British production, has been showing alarming signs of the lassitude, the tired feeling that seems suddenly to have gripped the English film—along with the accountants.

Perhaps the surest clue to this change is the superabundance of talk in the latest British imports, a sense that they would probably read better than they play. The talk may be very good—in fact, it generally is. But the talk proceeds at the expense of action, negating the visual qualities that the screen demands. **"The End of the Affair"** (Columbia), for example, based on Graham Greene's novel, emerges as a painfully static religious sermon. **"Court Martial"** (Kingsley Intl.), adapted from the play "Carrington, V. C.," by Dorothy and Campbell Christie, confines itself almost entirely to an exposition of the due process of military law. On the other hand, **"Chance Meeting"** (Pacemaker), perhaps because it was already in production last June, has far more visual excitement—and, it might be added, contemporary significance—than either of the others. These three films, I should point out, have not been chosen because they are typical but simply because they are current. The sharp decline in quality—by which I mean inventiveness, freshness of theme, vitality of approach—has been equally apparent in many another of the recent arrivals. In an earlier column I had occasion to mention England's growing reliance on American stars to sell their pictures. There also seems to be an increasing Americanization of British films. The net result, as things stand, can only mean fewer of the kind of pictures for which England has become justifiably famous during the past decade.

—ARTHUR KNIGHT.



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Two Hemispheres of English

A DECADE is a short period in the history of any art, and in literature as elsewhere too brief a span to merit assessment except as a convenient, if somewhat arbitrary, point of departure for a panoramic survey of the present. The ten years which have elapsed since the conclusion of the Second World War have seen no dawning of great literature either in England or in America, nor even the sunset brilliance of the England of the post-First World War era when Shaw and Wells, Hardy and Robert Bridges, Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence were still writing, or the morning vigor of the America of Sinclair Lewis and Scott Fitzgerald, Hemingway and O'Neill, Stephen Vincent Benét and John Dos Passos. To a certain extent the period has been one of stock-taking, of revised judgment, of forsaken, or lessened, enthusiasms. The stream of consciousness, psychoanalysis, proletarianism, the debunking of history and biography, experiment in poetry have lost the first keen edge of excitement as themes for literature. On both sides of the Atlantic there has been a slackening of tension in letters.

Nothing, perhaps, has been more indicative of the fact that America since the end of the First World War has come of age in literature than its ability to see its own production as part of the broad stream of English letters and yet to keep it no longer secondary to it. The British have recognized its new independence, and that independence has given it objectivity in analyzing the differences between the two literatures. The American finds in British letters, in its fiction, its history and biography, its travel—in its journalism, too—an urbanity, a finish, a practised skill in craftsmanship all too often lacking in his own nation's writing. If he feels less of daring and experimentation in the older literature, he sees in it a background of familiarity with the classic and the classics which his own authors rarely have and for which they can find no general public. If there is less heat in British writing, there is more grace and limpidity. And there are realms of British publishing which surpass both in quality and quantity similar work in America—the field of nature-writing, with its delight in country and flowers, so much more intimately familiar to the Englishman than to the average American; a type of scientific literature, produced in Britain by the scientists themselves instead of as here by "science writers."

There is, on the whole, a greater sobriety to British writing than to American, sprung, perhaps, from the fact that the British reading public is more homogeneous than the American. British fiction runs more to a pattern, yet its general literature—and it is a curious anomaly—has more room for eccentricity, or perhaps for the eccentrics, than has American. One wonders, indeed, whether the Britain that is evolving into the welfare state will continue to produce in the future as it has in the past the type of personal memoir which the Britain of an aristocracy so sure of its position as to be able to ignore orthodoxy has developed.

But that is merely one of the questions which arise from contemplation of the British literary scene. How much will the Victorians, so violently repudiated in this country for a time and in Britain, too, under the bludgeon of Lytton Strachey and his followers toppled from their high estate, recover of their eminence? Reconsideration of some of the judgments of the recent past is already under way. Will the consciousness of the Atomic Age permeate British literature as once Darwinism did? How will its young writers be affected by the ideological stresses and tensions of the present? How far, indeed, have they already been affected? It is in the hope of gaining light on some of Britain's current attitudes of mind as reflected in its literature, as well as of discussing that literature itself, that *The Saturday Review* has prepared this current issue. —A. L.

In Memory of Two Friends

Thomas W. Lamont and His Wife, Florence Corliss Lamont

(To this magazine, to Exeter, to Harvard after the Second World War and many other colleges and causes, and to the rebuilding of Canterbury Cathedral they gave generously. As all who knew them knew, they did not have to make a gift to give; their living was giving.)

By John Masefield

O PASSER-BY, remember these two Friends,
Who loved this Church of Christ, and greatly gave
To build anew the wreck the bombings drave.

All lovely giving is a Heavenly seed
Dropped to the chosen heart as glittering corn,
That everlasting gladness may be born,
Bread never-spent, Beauty that never ends.

Though darkness dim and dying take away,
The gladnesses of given kindness stay.
O Passer-By, think gently of these Friends;
The Light within them made God's Kingdom speed.

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TREVELYAN CASTS A LENGTHENING SHADOW

By C. V. WEDGWOOD

Cicely Veronica Wedgwood, who here considers British historical and biographical writing of the last decade, is herself one of England's leading historians. A graduate of Oxford, she has specialized in the seventeenth century, with studies on "The Thirty Years' War," "William the Silent" (winner of the James Tait Black Prize), and "Richelieu and the French Monarchy."

IN ENGLAND the years since the war have seen the maturing of the harvest sown nearly fifty years ago by Dr. G. M. Trevelyan. As a young man he led the revolt against the dry Germanic style of historical writing which had by then largely conquered the English universities. He declared, in the teeth of an academic opposition which has not yet altogether vanished, that it was possible to write history which was also good literature without sacrificing accuracy of scholarship.

There was nothing fundamentally new in the young Trevelyan's claim. The Anglo-Saxon peoples have what is undoubtedly the finest tradition in the modern world for doing just this—writing good history in good English, as the achievements of Gibbon, Macaulay, Prescott, Motley, and others bear eloquent witness. But early in this century this tradition stood in danger of being stifled by the purist scholars who believed that any concession to the graces of style and presentation necessarily entailed a loss of exactitude.

As far as England was concerned G. M. Trevelyan therefore headed a revolt which was also a return to the highest traditions of the past. But the struggle had to be fought on two fronts. It was necessary not only to convince the young men, as they came from the universities, that the writing of "literary history" was not something of which they need be ashamed; it was also necessary to regain the ear of the public.

Earlier in the nineteenth century all educated men, and those who wished to be educated, read history as a matter of course, and read it as much for pleasure as for profit. But with the decline in the supply of "literary history" came a decline in the number of readers. History came to be considered dry and dull—as by the beginning of the twentieth century it very often was. Those with specialized interests read about the subjects of their choice, but the general public either did not read history at all, or preferred gossipy, trivial, sensational works with no literary merit save that of lightness, and no historical value at all.

By the Thirties of this century the situation in England had been materially altered by Trevelyan himself and by those who were encouraged—often personally encouraged by him—to follow his example. Works of fine scholarship presented in a readable manner were once again in sufficient demand to make the publication of well-written serious history a risk that most good publishers were willing to take. Then came the Second World War with unforeseen and astonishing results. Whole new sections of the population discovered the joys of serious reading. The reasons were simple and cogent. Amusements were restricted; owing to the paper shortage much trivial and ephemeral literature simply vanished. Meanwhile many people found themselves employed in wartime duties which involved long hours of waiting—waiting to go on duty if the bombs should fall. During these hours they read; or at least some of them did—enough to cause within an astonishingly short time an unprecedented demand for books, and even for serious books. New histories and biographies now rocketed into the best-seller class. Prophets of gloom foretold that with the end of the war this new reading public would immediately vanish. Ten years after the war it is possible to say with some confidence that it has not vanished. There was of course a falling off when things returned to normal, but the position soon stabilized and if the public is not quite what it was in the war years, it is very much larger than it was before 1939.

The situation for the historian and biographer is therefore exceptionally favorable in Great Britain today. The tradition of literary history has been successfully revived and has a large number of successful and productive exponents. The doyen of the profession, G. M. Trevelyan wrote his last major work, "English Social History," in the early years of the war; he is now approaching his eightieth year but still gives us from time to time shorter essays which have all the old vigorous wisdom. Comparisons can be misleading, but there is some resemblance between the position of G. M. Trevelyan in England and that of the late Douglas Freeman in the United States. Both have something of the eighteenth century about them; with both the knowledge and practice of history was rooted in a deeper humanism, the product of a more leisured and gracious age than our own.

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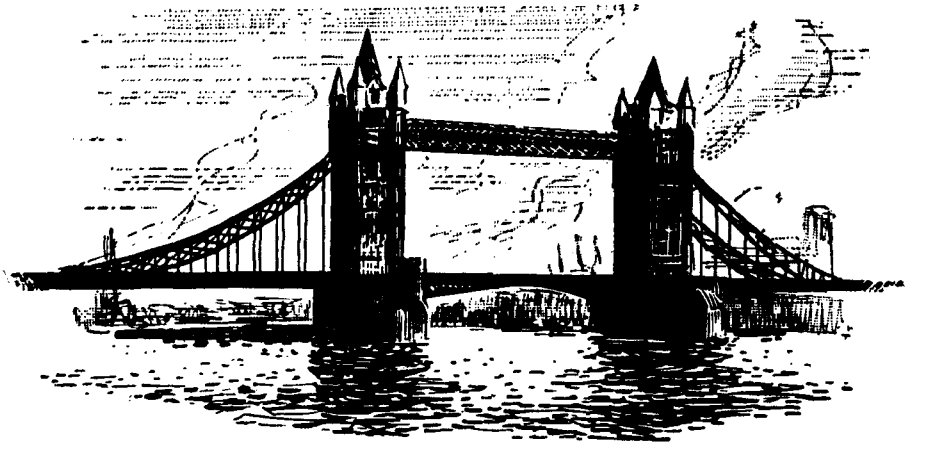

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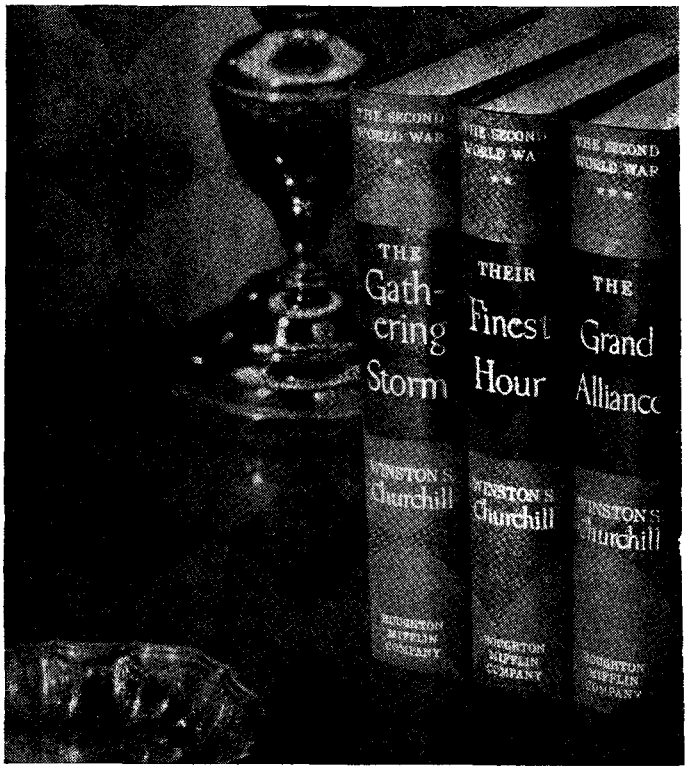

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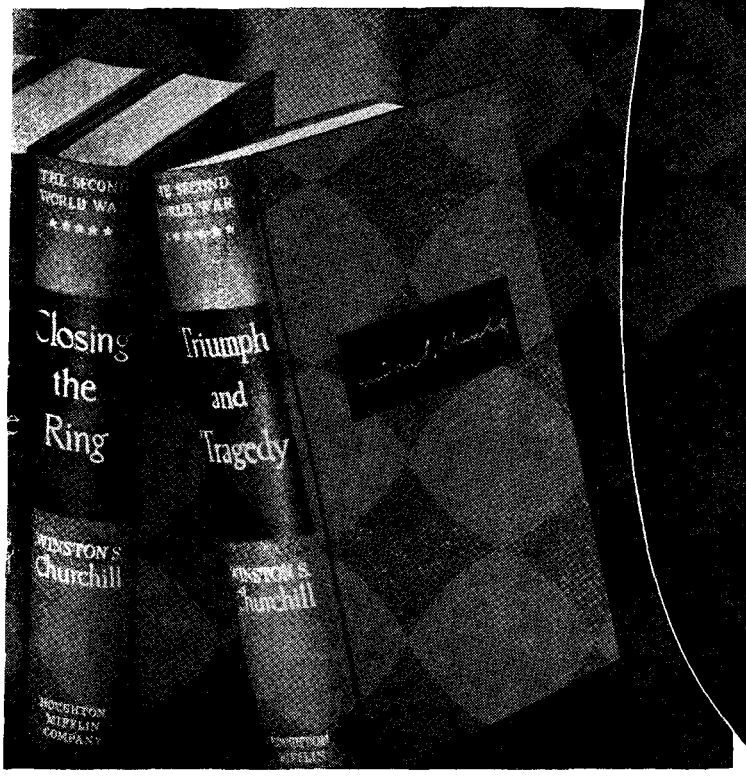

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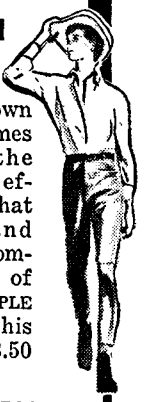

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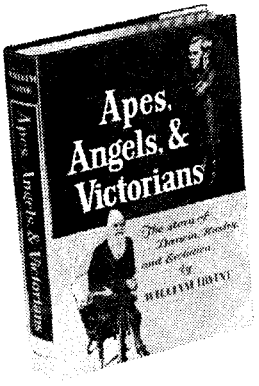

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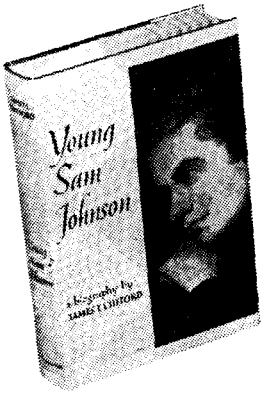

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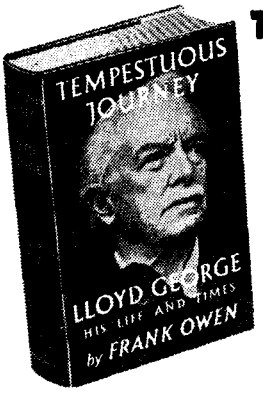

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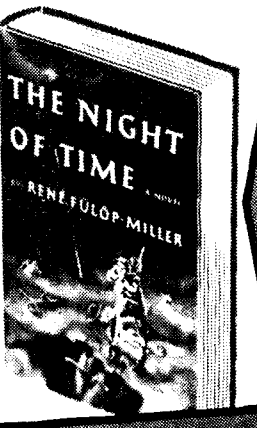

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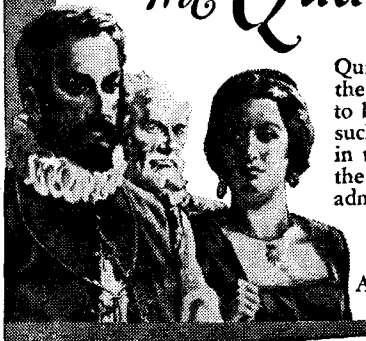

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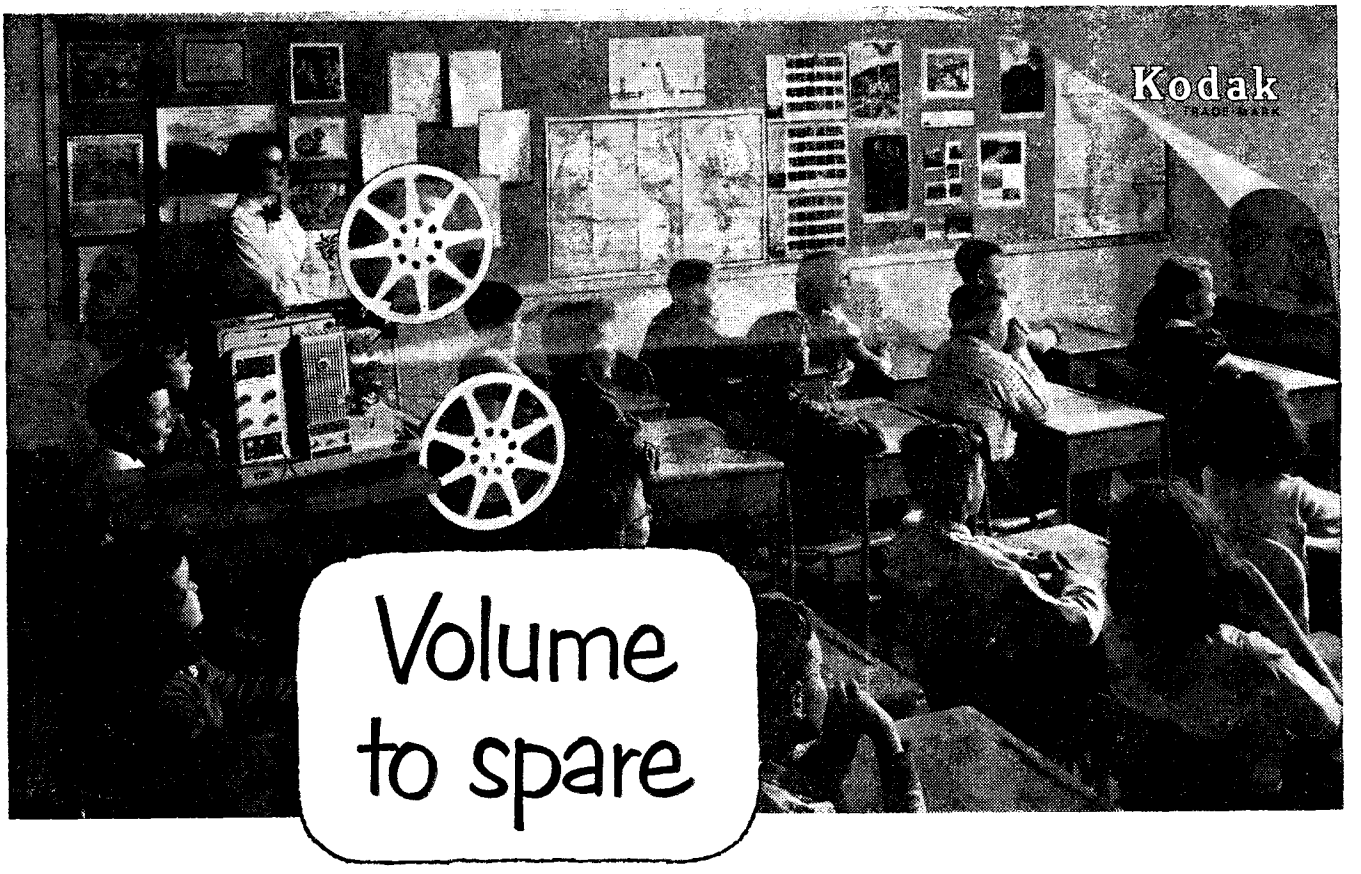

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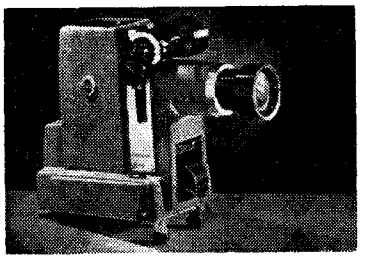

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SKEPTICISM BECOMES THE STYLE IN BRITAIN

By D. W. BROGAN

D. W. Brogan, perhaps the outstanding living interpreter of Britain to America, and vice versa. is a Glasgow Scot who studied at Oxford and now teaches at Cambridge. His book on "The English People" (1943) and his recently published "Politics in America," both widely read in this country, illustrate how much at home he is on both sides of the Atlantic.

IT IS an experience that sometimes befalls me to drop in on a friend and, automatically looking at his books, to see tucked away, not exactly hidden but not officiously exhibited, a row or two of dirty red books, the productions of the "Left Book Club" that, before the war, filled the shelves—and the minds—of so many of the young who cared for the good of the world. In that series were good books and bad, run-of-the-mill commentaries and narratives, books by open Party members and by fellow travelers; but all represented and fed an attitude, the attitude of "the popular front." That this once popular phrase was a mistranslation, of French or Spanish, did not matter. The front was popular, all right; to doubt the economic wisdom of the Blum Government, the durability of the second Spanish Republic, the broad-minded and loyal adherence of the Soviet Union to the principles of collective security was to write oneself down a reactionary and, in the eyes and mouths of some vivacious young women, "a fascist beast" or as near as makes no difference.

If I were asked to underline the difference between prewar and 1955 in political writing and discussion I should say that it is as well illustrated not merely by the failure to revive the Left Book Club, but by the very absurdity of such an idea. The enterprising publisher who ran the club is still in business; his blurbs are as exciting as ever; but his most characteristic publication in recent years has been a spiritual autobiography-sermon that those friends of mine who have read it think too long.

The brave days of subscribing to funds for Spanish loyalists (an epithet oddly insisted on by revolutionary propagandists) or speaking against Munich (I did both myself) are as remote from the young men I meet today as the enthusiasm with which the Delphic utterances of Mr. Gladstone were received. Did people *read* that kind of thing? Did they *believe* that kind of thing? The young are formally tolerant, but they shake their heads. Even from old fogies of forty and upwards that is a bit thick.

For the first thing to notice about the present state of political writing or comment in England is that it is unromantic, hard-boiled, skeptical of good intentions, prone to say with Goldsmith

> How small, of all that human hearts endure,
> That part which laws or kings can cause or cure.

The Left Book Club, with its easily identifiable villains, with its panaceas, its devil theories of politics, belongs to an age as remote and less amusing than that of Sandy Wilson's "The Boy Friend." I got my first indication of how far and fast the tide had turned when I heard in a Cambridge bookshop a young man of a distinctly King's type (a phrase I shall not attempt to translate, even approximately) say to another, "But you *don't* read the *New Statesman*, do you? You *mustn't*. You *mustn't*." Perhaps equally significant was the remark of my precocious eldest son, then just over eighteen, "I won't have my poor old *New Statesman* laughed at." The literate young today, as far as they care for politics, want a more dehydrated politics than the old firm supplies and, if not all the brains are on the Right, the wit, energy, aggressiveness are on the Right. The veteran barnstormers of the Left may

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tear a passion to tatters in the manner of the Oxford Union of the Thirties, but the audience of the critical young does not mark them.

Another symbol was the election of Michael Oakeshott to succeed the late Harold Laski as the Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics. For Laski was more important as a symbol than as a scholar. His generosity; his powers as a speaker (had he had a better voice and presence, one would have said as an orator); the role he played in Labour politics (exaggerated as it was by himself and by his enemies); his devotion to a romantic and sympathetic egalitarianism—all made him a symbol and a leader. Through him, the London School of Economics got a totally unjustified reputation as a center of "red" propaganda (both Oxford and Cambridge, in those years, were far more vulnerable to the charge) and his replacement, when his sudden death opened the succession, had an importance not usually attached to mere professional successions. And his successor had made *his* debut in political theory by a very understanding and sympathetic study of that very hard-boiled thinker, Hobbes, and his famous or notorious inaugural lecture was summed up, by a friendly critic, as a defense of the thesis that "this *is* the best of all possible worlds . . . and that all the evils in it are necessary evils." True or false, as they say in the more naive American college examinations, it would be hard to think of anything less like Laski, who often talked as if he believed, and often believed, that all would be well when the last king was strangled in the bowels of the last priest. It is not a widely accepted panacea in a country and an age when the royal family is more fantastically popular than ever, when the love life of Princess Margaret is not only a main subject of conversation in Britain but as far away as Colomb-Béchar.

What accounts for the change? One thing, of course, is the natural disillusionment that followed on the Labour triumph of 1945. "We are the masters now," said the ebullient lawyer, Sir Hartley Shawcross, who was to be Mr. Attlee's Attorney-General and who now spends what time he can spare from highly successful practice at the bar telling the Labour party some home truths about the hard facts of the hard world we live in. The Labour Government, when it finally fell in 1951, may not have been what Disraeli called the first great Gladstone government, a row of "exhausted volcanoes," but its program and promise did not stir any passionate enthusiasm. "Where do we go

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from here?" was a question that puzzled leaders as well as led. Nationalization had not proved a panacea in the mines or on the railroads; the nationalization of steel provoked no heart-stirring elation, and mild threats to nationalize shipping and shipbuilding evoked lively alarm. Even on the once "red Clyde," the thought of John Brown's being run by the Ministry of Production or by a "board" (a magic word that had lost its magic) chilled the blood.

Equally disconcerting was the renewed revelation that the rulers of the Workers' Fatherland were, in part, murderous crooks, as wicked as any American imperialist, and that revelation was based on the best of evidence, the confessions of the monsters themselves. It was particularly an unfortunate thing from the point of view of the faithful that the greatest intellectual ornament of the British Communist Party, star of the editorial board of the *Daily Worker*, old Etonian and scholar of New College, Professor J. B. S. Haldane, was a Professor of Genetics. Lysenko was too much for him; when last heard of Haldane was seeking comfort in Nehru's India, and a loyal mathematician, doing the figure eight on the party line, was no substitute.

There is still plenty of grimly determined optimism about the Soviet Union in Britain, not confined to the Labour Party. But the great days of Intourist are over. We shall not again see "Innocents Abroad" on the scale of the Webbs, on their knees in the Kremlin before burial in Westminster Abbey. Everything that has happened in Russia and the "liberated" countries since the war has destroyed the old "progressive" superstition. One result of this diminution of faith has been to increase the interest in realist political studies, in what is, for most Americans, the true sense of "political science." It is not unjust to say that before the war institutional studies were rather looked down on in England. Political theory was a branch of philosophy. What was a study of governmental mechanics if not an inferior, because necessarily unscholarly, branch of modern history? Something of that attitude lingers on, but it is under effective attack in Oxford, London, and Manchester. Perhaps the most representative example of this shift in interest and emphasis is Dr. Robert MacKenzie's recent and very remarkable study of British political parties. For it is Dr. MacKenzie's thesis, illustrated and demonstrated with very remarkable learning and acuteness, that the two major British parties, despite formal differences in structure, are much alike, that leadership is from the top down and that the effective chain of command is a

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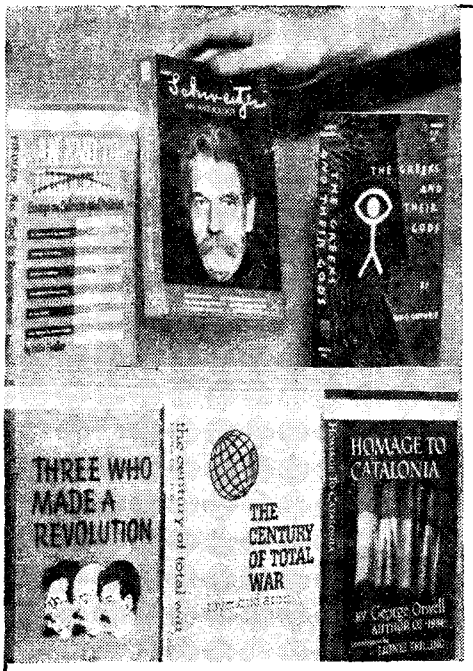
result not of the "constitution" of the Labour or Conservative parties, but of the necessities of parliamentary government on the English model. The House of Commons has determined what the English parties shall be like, not the mass media, not "democratic" ideology. In short, Montesquieu was right, the Webbs, Laski, and the doctrinaires wrong; the "spirit of the laws" is what matters.

The results of such investigations, sponsored by institutions like the Tavistock center as well as by the universities, has been to depress further the old, optimistic left-wing stocks. The market is definitely bearish on the meliorist side. For one thing, the great material improvement in the "condition of the people," the disappearance of unemployment, has not been accompanied by an equivalent improvement in moral standards. Compared with those of New York the problems of adolescent disorder in London are hardly worth mentioning. The swarms of adolescent prostitutes that shocked the American G.I. during the war (I have more than once heard the verbal expressions of shock) were merely an expression of a deep change in sexual morality, or merely revealed what some had long suspected, that middle-class standards had not, in fact, gone down very deep. And as, despite Billy Graham, there are no real signs of that statistical boom in religion that marks the United States at the moment, the English or British public is faced with the problem of what to find to replace the "Nonconformist conscience." From that point of view, the steady decline in working-class Methodism is a sobering fact. (Not so important, but significant of something or other, is the steady recruiting of the ranks of prostitution from Ireland.)

It is evident that the newly emancipated workers are not begging, eagerly, for admission to the cultural treasures of their quondam betters. The television aerial is a negative sign of cultural status in most parts of England, the priorities of economic demand in the new housing estates do not encourage the old-fashioned radical of the school of William Morris. Some, at any rate, of the opposition to commercial television came from a half-admitted fear that the taste of the masses was doomed to be vulgar and bad, that only by keeping control of the mass media could the educated classes save the workers from themselves. The implications for political democracy were obvious, although possibly not to the defenders of the BBC monopoly. For it was a strain on faith to believe that a voter who could not be trusted to choose a



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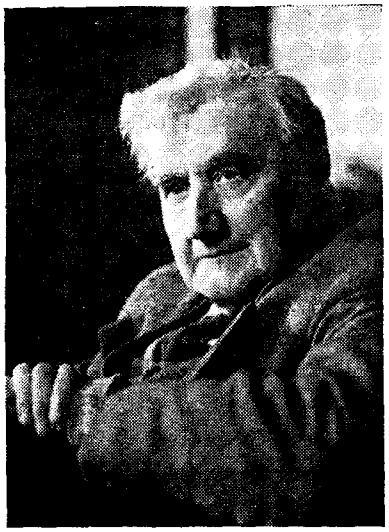

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television program was to be trusted to choose a foreign policy.

It must be remembered that traditional values are now once again treasured in England. Professor Edward Shils of Chicago and London has recently pointed out in *Encounter* how completely the intellectuals now accept the *status quo* in England. It *is* the best of all possible worlds and "best" has for many of them the meaning of good, not merely less bad. They look out on a world that, for different reasons, they find distasteful. They look out on a Russia where the show-business maxim "it's tough at the top" has acquired a new significance and where the daffodils that dared to "take the winds of March with beauty" under Malenkov have been nipped in the bud under the new (or old) management. They look at a United States, too often personified for them by Senator McCarthy and whose literature, where it is still admired, is personified by Messrs. Faulkner and Salinger. They look at a France politically incoherent, at a Germany with nothing to say of interest. They look at themselves and modestly ask, as do the Scots, "Wha's like us?" and stay to give their answer, "Naebody," followed by three rousing cheers.

Against this, some lone voices can be heard. Robin Marris has argued that if Christianity means anything it involves economic egalitarianism. Mrs. Barbara Wootton, in an acute analysis of the ambiguities and contradictions of the current wage structure, argues for the adoption of egalitarianism as a more just and effective guiding principle. But a series of strikes motivated by a desire to maintain the old differentials and secure "the rate for the job" regardless of the community interest suggest that more than the selfish bourgeoisie have to be converted.

And above all, to return to my original theme, there is deep and wide skepticism about schemes of human betterment based on an optimistic view of human nature, especially political human nature. In a brilliant and symptomatically ironical account of the Labour Party pilgrimage to the "People's China," George Stafford Gale of the *Manchester Guardian* has laid it down that "there is precious little room for metaphysics in the politics of politicians, whatever Plato or Michael Oakeshott or Marx might say." This is representative of the new generation—and of the new *Manchester Guardian*. Significantly again, his book is called "No Flies in China." There are no flies on Mr. Gale or his like, and that is why the dust gathers on the once-treasured volumes of the Left Book Club.

Science-Writing

Continued from page 31

is unsatisfactory. The clarity of a technical discussion can never quite be reproduced in ordinary words. If it could, technical language and mathematics would never have been invented. It is rather like seeing a landscape blurred, always a little out of focus.

YET when all this has been said and admitted, I myself doubt whether it is sufficiently strong to support the rather disdainful point of view of many scientists. Let us consider, for instance, the point about loss of time from research. Think how much more time a scientist would lose if he had to grow all his own food, build his house, and make his own clothes. A scientist does not have to do these things because he is provided with them by the community in which he lives; and it seems to me that in return he has something of a duty to tell the community about what it is that he is doing. After all, science is mainly supported nowadays by the taxes that the average man pays, and it seems little enough in return that when the average man is interested in what the scientist is doing he should be told about it—and that he should be told by the man best qualified to tell him, namely by the scientist himself.

Then, there is a really important matter of principle. It can scarcely be denied that scientific discovery is one of the main forces that is directing change in the world—I mentioned this already at the beginning, and it seems to me important that the people should hear directly from the scientist what discoveries he is making and what he expects to discover in the future. Very partially this does happen, but really it is only the political authorities who hear a full account of the scientists' activities and who have any real say in controlling them. Mostly the people only hear about crucial scientific discoveries, as they affect society, through the agency of the political middle-man. There are some who think this a good thing, but as a believer in democracy I do not agree with them.

The central modern problem of science-writing, whether in Britain or elsewhere, lies, in my opinion, in this issue: in the relationship of the scientist to the public.

Now, having taken a bite at the big problem let us look at some of the details. In spite of the reluctance of scientists to commit themselves to

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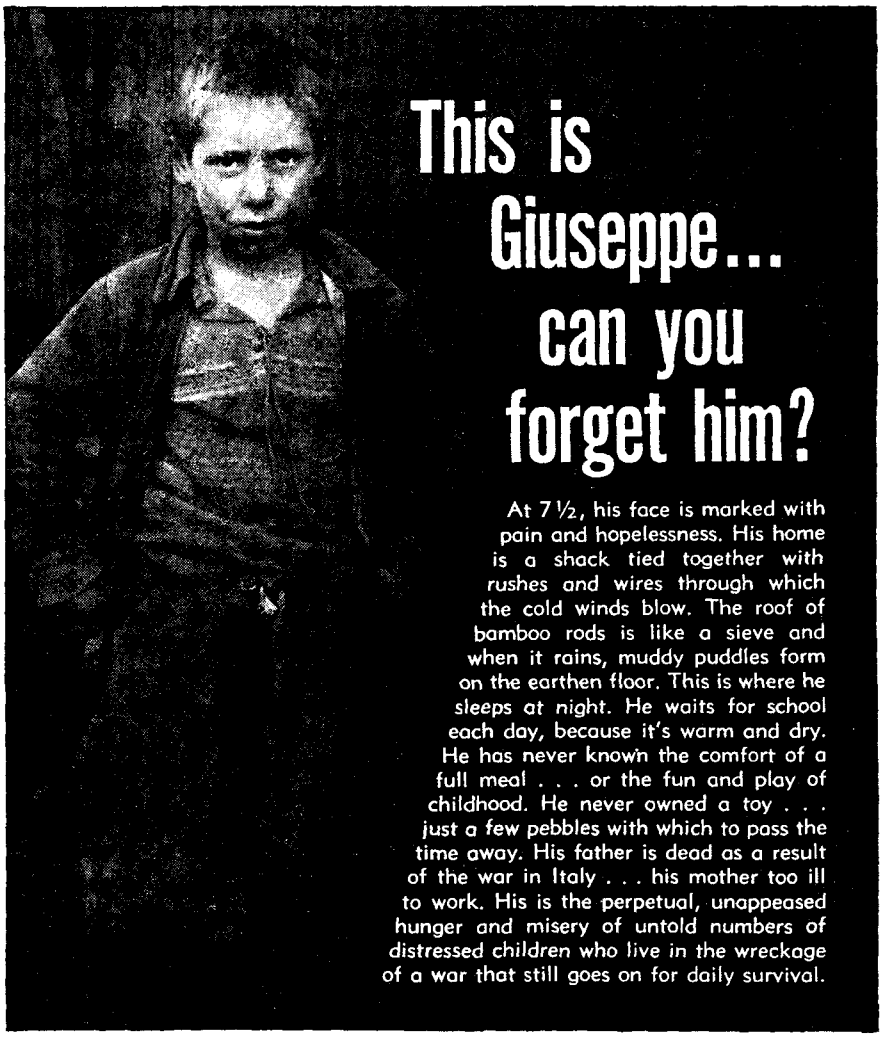
popular writing, it is undeniable that quite a lot of good popular science does get written. I have mentioned the British publication of Penguin "Science News." An enterprise started after the war, this has now reached its thirty-fifth volume. A glance at any one of the volumes shows up an interesting difference between Britain and the United States. Whereas the British like reading books, Americans seem to prefer reading magazines. The volumes of Penguin "Science News" are built up of articles, all of which might very well have appeared in magazines. It is as though *Scientific American* were to bind up its articles into books. The articles themselves range over all the branches of science, over the whole alphabet from Astronomy to Zoology. Penguin "Science News" is an inexpensive publication. Each volume is priced in Britain at about the equivalent of thirty cents and sells in hundreds of thousands of copies, a point which reinforces my remarks about the modern demand for information.

THE flow of higher priced books is steady but is more a trickle than a flood. The numbers are increasing, however, and I think they are likely to go on doing so in the future, as the traditional taboo against science-writing becomes weaker.

Although the British are not inveterate magazine readers, the information must be interpolated that several magazines dealing with science command a fairly wide circulation. *Discovery*, *Endeavour*, and *Progress* are examples. These enterprises are often backed by commercial concerns, as for instance *Endeavour* is supported by Imperial Chemical Industries and *Progress* by Unilever.

A curious feature is the almost complete exclusion of science from British radio and television. This is in part due to the failure of scientists to express themselves in terms of these media. To write about science is difficult, as I have already said, but to broadcast science seems still more difficult. The present situation must surely be temporary, however, and it seems likely that science broadcasting will become more frequent, just as it seems certain that the avidity of the British public's demand for scientific information will continue to grow in the years to come. The publisher that I mentioned at the beginning had no doubts that present trends were going to continue, and he expects to see a steadily widening gap opening between science and non-fiction generally, on the one hand, and works of fiction on the other hand. In this I think he will prove right.



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British Novel

Continued from page 23

to look for the germs of the future England is in the light-industry areas and along the arterial roads. . . . In those vast new wildernesses of glass and brick the sharp distinctions of the older type of town, with its slums and mansions, or of the country, with its manor houses and squalid cottages, no longer exist. There are wide gradations of income, but it is the same kind of life that is being lived at different levels, in labor-saving flats or Council houses, along the concrete roads and in the naked democracy of the swimming pools."

WHAT, in this new England, was to happen to the novel? When people no longer cared about the shoes in which you came down to breakfast what were you going to use for comedy? When people had never heard of the Lung'Arno where were you going to set your scene? In 1950 there appeared a novel which indicated a possible answer to these questions, "Scenes from Provincial Life," by William Cooper. The hero was a grammar-school master in a provincial town; the opening scene took place in a cafe. The book was very funny (and rather distressing) about the sex-war, but one of the most interesting things about it was its classlessness. Since then three novels have appeared which have some affinities with this book but even stronger connections among themselves. These three novels have attracted more attention and controversy than anything that has happened in English fiction for years. They are "Hurry on Down," by John Wain, "Lucky Jim," by Kingsley Amis, and "Under the Net," by Iris Murdoch. (These three people, all around thirty, are, like the group I dealt with first, Oxford contemporaries.) The three books are alike in many ways; they are all Orwellian in the sense of being classless, but of the three writers Mr. Wain is most specifically a disciple of Orwell, about whose work he has written some of the most penetrating things said on the subject. Miss Murdoch has undergone some French influence—*she* has written about Sartre. Mr. Amis's is perhaps the most ludicrously funny work to have appeared in this country since 1945. From these books, with their similarities and diversities, a new Hero has been seen to emerge, a Hero who, according to Walter Allen, writing in the *New Statesman* "goes tough . . . at the least suspicion of the phoney. . . . One may speculate whence he derives. The Services, certainly, helped to make him; but George Orwell, Dr. Leavis, and the Logical Positivists or, rather, the attitudes these represent—all contributed to his genesis." (Some American influence too, perhaps? One might expect it, yet I doubt if it is there except in some form too diffuse to be traceable or interesting. American and English fiction seem to me to have drifted apart in this period.) Interest in these novels led to controversy. J. B. Priestley in an article on "The Newest Novelist" in the same periodical expressed concern about this new hero's basic irresponsibility, about the way in which he "contracted out" of society. A little later Mr. Priestley presided over a meeting at the Institute of Contemporary Arts at which this question was discussed. He took occasion to refer to a recent, much publicized series of articles in one of the Sunday papers, which examined with much portentousness the question of whether the Novel was Dead. He called the audience, which had packed itself in until it could hardly breathe, to witness that it was not. And indeed the old creature seems, with the aid of a shot in the arm from these newcomers, to be once again as lively as a cricket.

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Trevelyan

Continued from page 38

biography of importance is Harold Nicolson's life of King George V. The constitutional position of the British monarch presents a considerable technical problem to the biographer; it is essential to cover a very wide political field while retaining the coherent thread of the personal life. Humane, deeply interested in human beings, and fully versed in politics, Harold Nicolson achieved a masterly work.

BOTH in biography and in history the postwar years in England have seen the ever closer fusion of learning and literature. The distinction between the academic and the non-academic historian has almost disappeared, at least as a criterion of criticism. It is an interesting truth that some of the most important additions to knowledge have been contributed by non-academics like Mrs. Woodham-Smith, and some of the most deliberately literary work by academics like David Cecil. Something of the same kind appears also to be happening in the United States, where the barrier between academic and literary history is being gradually lowered under the influence of good popular writing, and the increasing demand of the general public for "serious" history.

There is always a danger that historical writing may fall into a convention which, however good in itself, will grow stale with too much use. The imitators of Gibbon, the imitators of Macaulay, the imitators of Lytton Strachey have all in different degrees shown that an energetic and original literary technique can become thin and mechanical in course of time. The general level of literary competence among modern English historians and biographers is an encouraging sign. Yet one sometimes feels the need of new vitality. With an assured market and a friendly public, English historians perhaps lack in the literary field the element of challenge which, fifty years ago, inspired the young Trevelyan. The major achievement of the present generation has been to revive and establish the position of history and biography as a legitimate branch of literature and a nursery for distinguished prose. But there is something a little too safe about the present position. And prose is not always enough. What is too rarely felt in modern English historical writing is the daring and vision of the poet. We have had our Trevelyan; we are still waiting for our Sandburg.

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BROADWAY POSTSCRIPT

Seventeen Playwrights Self-Appraised

PLAYWRIGHT	LAST PLAY PRODUCED AND THEME	PLAY IN PROGRESS	WHAT STEPS MIGHT BE TAKEN TO ENCOURAGE THE WRITING OF BETTER PLAYS
T. S. ELIOT (Age sixty-seven)	"The Confidential Clerk." (What the theme is is anybody's guess.)	The "play now in progress" isn't in progress yet, and I am not yet ready to disclose either the name or what I think the theme will be.	Mr. Martin Browne has produced all my plays so far, with increasing satisfaction to myself, but, of course, afterward, I like to see my plays produced by other people just as I like to have them acted by different people from the original cast. In that way I can gradually find out how much there is in the play, and how much is the invention of producers and actors.
CHRISTOPHER FRY (Age forty-seven)	"The Dark Is Light Enough." ("Reverence for life," as Schweitzer would say, and the relationship of the divine with the human.)	"Tiger at the Gates" (a translation of Giraudoux' "La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu") and "The Lark" (a translation of Anouilh's "L'Alouette").	Discourage the critics! This isn't based on my own experience, but on seeing how writers such as John Whiting and Denis Cannan have had cold water thrown on them when they showed the beginnings of their individual styles.
CHRISTOPHER HASSALL (Age forty-three)	"Troilus and Cressida." (Opera libretto — a variation on the story as told by Chaucer.)	A revision of "The Player King" and a new musical comedy.	a) Revise the Entertainment Tax. b) Revise the Income Tax laws governing self-employed persons.
RONALD DUNCAN (Age forty)	"The Death of Satan." (Don Juan sent up to Earth by Satan to find why people don't suffer in Hell anymore.)	"Phedra." (Women are creatures of vanity, but are without pride.)	Every town should run a theatre (they are as necessary as public lavatories). Such civic theatres should commission dramatists to write. Many indifferent plays must be written for a few good ones to emerge.
CHARLES MORGAN (Age sixty-one)	"The Burning Glass." (The excessive power of Man over Nature.)		A first-rate non-profitmaking producing society corresponding to The Stage Society, which gave GBS his start. Two very distinguished experimental performances only. The society to run at a loss.
JOHN WHITING (Age thirty-seven)	"Marching Song." (The problems of an European general returning to his own country after defeat in war.)	Translation from the French.	A wider use of the Continental method of repertory production for modern plays, so that a play doesn't at once disappear for twenty years after its first London showing. Such a theatre would play each week, say, three modern plays.
DENIS CANNAN (Age thirty-six)	"Misery Me!" (Man a captive of his own ideas.)		We can do nothing about authors' souls and talents; we could do something about the organization of the theatre. We need smaller theatres, no taxes, and reduced cost of production.
PETER USTINOV (Age thirty-four)	"No Sign of the Dove." (The inadequacy of esoteric intellectuals in the face of the horrors of progress.) Just completed: "The Empty Chair."	"Romanoff and Juliet"—the conflict of love and politics, of laughter and dialectic. A paean to inefficiency and humanism.	Fewer and less intelligent critics. All the arts are inhibited in our day by those who know too much and feel too little. It is inhuman to judge everything alongside perfection. Sometimes one must be thankful that there is anything at all. What is perfection anyway? The enemy of personality. Death.
YVONNE MITCHELL (Age thirty)	"The Same Sky." (Racial tolerance. Romeo and Juliet story in London blitz.)	(Success and failure; pretty actress of forty and plain step-daughter.)	Training directors to understand plays so that the plays are made as simple and clear to audiences as they are on paper.
BEN TRAVERS (Age sixty-nine)	"Wild Horses" (farce).	New comedy (I prefer not to publish title and theme yet).	The disintegration of the managerial octopus . . . the few moguls who control the London market simply because they are the lessees of the bricks and mortar . . . It cramps an author's style to feel he must conform to their policy.
HUGH WILLIAMSON (Age fifty-four)	"Diamond Cut Diamond." (The attempt of a Catholic girl to escape from a situation in which though innocent she could be cited in a divorce case.)	"Bishops and Curates." (A satire—based on observation—of the way preferment is gained in the Church of England.)	A law to prevent any one man or company owning or controlling more than two London theatres. Before the war there were at least thirteen managements with different tastes. Now—effectively—there are not more than three; and one of these has a virtual monopoly of first refusals.
NORMAN C. HUNTER (Age forty-six)	"A Day by the Sea." (The crisis of lost opportunity in middle-age against a background of youth and old age.)	"The Excursion." (A study of failure and self-deception and the saving grace of human relationships.)	A practical two-year course in dramatic writing might be organized at one of the universities. Many promising writers cannot face the long, disappointing, and haphazard apprenticeship that writing for the stage involves now.
ALAN MELVILLE (Age forty-five)	"Simon and Laura." (Couple who loathe each other forced to play adoring couple on daily TV serial.)	"Feeling in the Country." (Ex-Queen Marie of Rumania type asked back to throne after twenty-five years of exile.)	1) Concentrate on the *idea*, rather than on the advisability of writing whacking good parts for whacking good star actors. 2) If you think your play is okay as it stands, have the courage *not* to agree to changes suggested by stars, directors, or management.
ROGER MacDOUGALL (Age forty-five)	"The Facts of Life." (A modern version of the "Ugly Duckling" story.)		Cut the Entertainment Tax.
TERENCE RATTIGAN (Age forty-four)	"Separate Tables." (Two short plays set in a small English hotel. The second arouses sympathy for a middle-aged sexual offender.)	[EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Rattigan is in Australia, and therefore the editor is providing answers mostly from the prefaces to "The Collected Plays of Terence Rattigan."]	To me, the impartiality of the unpopular dramatists in prefatorially attacking the West End theatre is rather suspect. I sometimes mildly wonder, when reading his vituperations against Shaftesbury Avenue, whether a nice solid two-year run would not have slightly mellowed his views.
DENIS JOHNSTON (Age fifty-four)	"The Golden Cuckoo." (The virtue of rebellion.)	Adaptation of "Six Characters in Search of an Author."	Less intimidation of dramatists by producers, public, and critics. More repertory and semi-professional groups to do new works.
SANDY WILSON (Age thirty)	"The Boy Friend." (A new musical comedy of the 1920s.)	"Oh! Henry." (A musical version of the movie "The Private Life of Henry VIII.")	The writer of musicals would be encouraged by managements' gambling on a native musical rather than betting on the 90 per cent certainty of an American import.

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The survey below is the result of hounding British playwrights into making statements that most of them feared they would regret the rest of their lives. The one exception was Peter Ustinov, who rushed back his answer with a note that said, "I hope you will forgive my untypical British promptness. I can't wait to read the finished compendium of our foibles and our prejudices—a compendium which no British journal would ever dream of assembling." At the other end of the scale, Christopher Fry, who cooperated only out of graciousness, voiced the strongest apprehensions about being included. He said, "You know how strongly I dislike pigeonholing, tabulating, and making dogmatic statements which may become untrue almost as soon as you've made them. Down with questionnaires." Some playwrights approached were unreachable, and it must be assumed that a few others simply dropped the questionnaire in their wastebaskets. Therefore, this survey is in a sense incomplete. Yet it would seem to be a pretty fair sampling of English dramatists, and gives a more rounded picture of the contemporary British theatre than would an article written by any one expert.

—HENRY HEWES.

FAVORITE OWN PLAY	FAVORITE PLAYWRIGHT	WHAT IS THE CURRENT TREND IN BRITISH PLAYS AND HOW DO YOU RELATE YOUR OWN WORK TO IT?
Has always been the last one I have written, except when I am in the process of writing a new play, and then my favorite is the one I am writing.	I suppose that an honest living playwright must always admit that his favorite living playwright is himself.	[EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Eliot found these questions unanswerable. However, his statement about the value of seeing different productions of his plays seemed as good as an answer. As for the final question, the poet has admitted to trying to write plays in verse that do not sound like verse, and using a meter of his own invention. In his last three plays he has used themes from Greek plays in contemporary British settings. However, he has used them more as a stimulus for his own thinking than as parallels. He believes that the best verse-drama will come from poets turning to playwriting rather than playwrights turning to poetry.]
In different plays I was arriving at different things, and I like those parts of them which come near to saying what I saw.	Easier to name plays—"Juno and the Paycock" certainly—but a list is meaningless, as I have seen so few modern plays.	I think any time is always premature to talk about trends; but—if anything—I should say the most important tendency in the British theatre is that it can contain a greater variety of plays. We want not one kind but many kinds of theatre.
"Christ's Comet" (1938).	Fry.	The reaction against naturalism led by James Bridie and O'Casey. My play "Out of the Whirlwind," designed for the Coronation platform in Westminster Abbey—though singularly unsuccessful with the critics—was a technical experiment in the non-naturalistic style.
"Stratton" (1950).	Gabriel Marcel.	Breakdown of box set and naturalistic tea-cup-cocktail convention. Drama should not be lifelike but greater than life. Poetry is the ideal language for drama, because it is as concise as a cablegram. I'm therefore writing poetic drama and hope to bring drama into arena theatre, where the audience is fully implicated in the action.
"The River Line" (1951).	Jean-Jacques Bernard.	I aim at lucidity and tension of narrative plus a poetic intensity to be obtained by a heightening and compression of language without moving into a verse-form. I don't like free verse—anyhow it doesn't come naturally to *me*—and until I find a way to apply the regular meters to contemporary theatre I must go on as I am.
"Marching Song" (1954).	Thornton Wilder.	The most influential plays over the past ten years have been, I suppose, those of Eliot and Fry—both poets working in the theatre. They have undoubtedly influenced prosewriters like myself. However, the influence is now, I think, on the wane or, rather, has been absorbed. At the moment any trends are confused. In the next few years I rather think that all playwrights writing in English in Europe will have to find a new way.
		The tendency to write comedies dealing with serious rather than trivial topics. (Eliot, Fry, Ustinov, Whiting, and MacDougall.)
"The Moment of Truth" (1951).	No permanent loyalty, but incessant flirtation.	The mark of the British arts is their ability to avoid trends. The contact between artists who think alike is rarer here than it is in New York. However, the rich and vague and pliable English language (far more reticent than the sparkling crispness of American) lend itself to expressions of a poetic nature. My weakness and my strength is due to being temperamentally and intellectually a foreigner. When I succeed it is perhaps because I see things with a new eye; when I fail it is perhaps because I see things with a different eye.
	Jean Anouilh, Cannan, Whiting, Ustinov.	The best new plays are plays of ideas written in a modern idiom with a satirical or comic approach. Unfortunately, mine are more old-fashioned. The first was a plain story about human beings; the second more a play of moods.
"Banana Ridge" (1938).	Myself and Emlyn Williams.	The tendency to turn the theatre into a gymnasium where the Eliots, Frys, and Anouilhs display their brilliant gifts is surely temporary. For the primary function of a play is to entertain by use of construction and climax. My main object has been to introduce the spirit of complete sincerity into farce. Normal characters in outrageous circumstances.
"Mr. Gladstone" (1937). (Though televised and published is still banned in the theatre because of its too frank picture of Queen Victoria.)	François Mauriac.	No definite ones. The avant garde depends almost entirely on imports from France. Where there is any genuine English work it is bedevilled by the accidental popularity of Fry (whose work Paris so exactly estimates) and Eliot (which is entirely misunderstood by the "fashionable" audience). The habit of putting together two or three stars in one play inevitably results in worthless star vehicles being wonderfully mounted and acted. So the stars themselves, tired of twaddle, have all made a bee-line for Shakespeare and there is hardly one first-class actor available for any new modern play. I have always stood right outside the popular stream.
The last one.	Fry.	If there is a trend in British playwriting, I would say it is towards the recognition of the stage as a serious medium of artistic expression, and the recent incursion into the theatre of writers like Eliot, Fry, and Greene may be said to support this opinion. The spread of TV is obliging the playwright to offer the public something of a quality that a medium of mass entertainment is unlikely to produce.
"Jonathan" (ran eleven nights, 1948).	Rattigan.	I don't think there are any important trends in British playwriting at the moment. We have a pretty healthy theatre and writers produce season after season an interesting if somewhat unenterprising bill of fare—of the usual mixture of farces, comedies, thrillers, drama, and serious thoughtful plays, descending in that order of frequency. All I try to do is to make people laugh.
"MacAdam and Eve" (1950).	Sean O'Casey.	The evolution of a new form—comedies with teeth. If you're not careful you don't notice the teeth. Americans, for instance, don't notice the teeth in my comedies, but they get bitten just the same. Some day I hope they will bite even in the USA.
"Adventure Story" (1949).		The revolution begun by Eliot and Fry and maintained and developed by Forsyth, Duncan, and Ustinov is to be wholeheartedly welcomed, for it has rescued the theatre from the thraldom of middle-class vernacular. But the movement will not survive unless its future exponents possess as strong a sense of theatre. I "please to write" in the naturalistic convention and the "best I may" would quickly become the worst if I denied myself my gift for telling a story and delineating a character in terms of everyday speech.
"A Bride for the Unicorn" (1933).	Fry.	Apart from the rediscovery of verse by Fry, there have been no new trends in British playwriting since O'Casey went off the rails. My own work tries to plow a furrow of its own which nobody likes except myself.
"The Buccaneer" (1953).	Composer: Richard Rodgers; Lyricist: Frank Loesser.	A vague and febrile fluctuation between 1) a misguided attempt to imitate the American musical and 2) a leaning towards the semi-amateur and miniature because they allegedly have charm and simplicity. I can only relate my work to the latter because I'm afraid "The Boy Friend" was chiefly responsible. I am trying to make a trend of my own.

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OPERATIC HIGH ROAD, SYMPHONIC RUT

TWO main trends are discernible in postwar British music—the operatic and the symphonic. The opera has been represented almost entirely by those composers who were already more or less well established before the war, while the true postwar composers, with one or two of their seniors, notably Rubbra and Rawsthorne, have almost unanimously and unswervingly pursued the symphonic.

The postwar English movement towards opera was set off by Britten, who besides being exceptionally gifted was exceptionally lucky in being commissioned while in America to write for Koussevitzky the opera that began it all—"Peter Grimes." He returned to England to complete it, and it was chosen for performance at the reopening of the Sadler's Wells Theatre in London in June 1945. A tremendous success, it fired both our composers and our musical administrators with the desire to see a national opera established in Britain. Nearly all our senior composers, who had never before had a chance to write an opera, were stimulated and challenged, and all set about writing them. First was Bliss, with "The Olympians," staged at Covent Garden in 1949 with little success. Then came "Wat Tyler," by Alan Bush (born in 1900), a talented composer who has consistently hampered his music with slightly absurd political propaganda that exposes it to ridicule rather than odium; this is the fault of this opera, which won one of the prizes offered by the Arts Council for operas during the Festival of Britain in 1951 but which has had to go to Leipzig for a stage performance, where its politics are not thought laughable.

Then followed "Nelson," by Lennox Berkeley (born in 1903), who has successfully applied a French musical training to English traditions; "The Midsummer Marriage," by Michael Tippett (born in 1905), the most original but most complex and difficult composer of the group; and finally "Troilus and Cressida," by Walton (born in 1902), who was before the war the undisputed leader of his generation, but has produced very little during the last fifteen years.

All this activity has reached a climax this season, during which these last three operas have all been staged in London—Berkeley's at Sadler's Wells, the other two at Covent Garden. None of them can be acclaimed unreservedly a masterpiece, but in spite of their miscalculations they all promise well for the operatic future of their composers. The most likely to write a really successful second opera is Berkeley, who has already produced a little chamber-operatic farce. Tippett says that he hopes one day to write another. Bush has already done so, in response to a commission from East Germany. But even if none of their high operatic hopes is realized, and the phase passes quietly out, the experience will have done them good as an antidote to the excessive addiction to symphonic music in the two previous decades.

THAT our younger composers have ridden so readily into the symphonic rut is again to some extent a matter of opportunity. With all our hopes for opera, it was obvious that things would move slowly, and that the older composers would get the first chance. On the other hand, we already have a highly developed orchestral culture in which there is at least a modest place for new symphonic works. There is also the Cheltenham Festival of British Contemporary Music, founded immediately after the war, which has a fixed pattern of some six orchestral concerts each year at each of which one major new work is played—generally a symphony or a concerto. This has been a great encouragement to our composers to concentrate on works of this type.

Much as there is to respect and admire in some of these works, their composers are not contributing anything very original to the music of the Fifties. The younger ones are in many ways less interesting than the older. Rubbra (born in 1901) goes on doggedly producing symphonies (he has just promised a seventh for a commission), which are getting gradually better and brighter. His latest, No. 6, is an outstanding work. Rawsthorne (born in 1905) writes only abstract instrumental music which is all very similar, and its interest quickly exhausted, but which has a distinctive personal note lacking in the music of any of the younger composers. The best of these is Fricker (born in 1920), who has had more contact with young composers abroad, especially in Germany, than most of his contemporaries.

Here we have half an explanation of our other postwar composers' devotion to the symphony—their, and our, essentially Teutonic and romantic moral

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attitude to music. They are all deadly earnest. The other half of the explanation is our inherent national conservatism. We have always been behind the times, and in 1955 we are still buried back in the Thirties, our young composers working with thoughtless industry and facility at turning out intense Teutonic symphonies that belong to that age, while the young Germans themselves are engaged in a stimulating traffic in new ideas with France and Italy. None of our young composers seems yet to have realized that symphony is not the only alternative to opera. We have no equivalent of Boulez in France, Stockhausen in Germany, Nono in Italy; no practitioner of *musique concrète*, electronic music, or prepared-piano music, not even a mild disciple of Webern.

This is not to suggest that wild or extreme composers are necessarily better, but they do serve to stir up ideas and prevent the stagnation in which England's music seems bogged down. No doubt there is some promise in all our outdated activity, but it is not easy to imagine what it is a promise of. It certainly promises no successor to our two really major composers, Vaughan Williams and Britten, who belong neither to the symphonic nor to the operatic group. Although Vaughan Williams has written more symphonies than any other living English composer of any note, he has only occasionally struck the main symphonic track. None of his symphonies is stereotyped; every one has been unique, new in kind as well as in content, similar to the others only in his unmistakable personality. And as he finishes out his long career he remains as original and unpredictable as ever. Similarly Britten, although he started the movement towards opera and has written another six operas, besides many other major works has had no further part in that movement. He quickly left the others far behind. Each new opera has been a new problem, a new solution, a new conception, a new musical world. His latest is largely based on a twelve-note theme.

These are the only two genuinely original figures in postwar British music, and they do not truly belong to it or represent it—they represent only themselves. Probably the same is true of the comparable composers in other countries and of any genuinely original composer at any time. In that case Britain ranks high to have two such figures working at the same time, with Tippett a fairly distant third. What we cannot offer is much evidence of any virility, exuberance, or boldness in our sedate and respectable younger composers.

—Colin Mason, *music critic*, Manchester Guardian.

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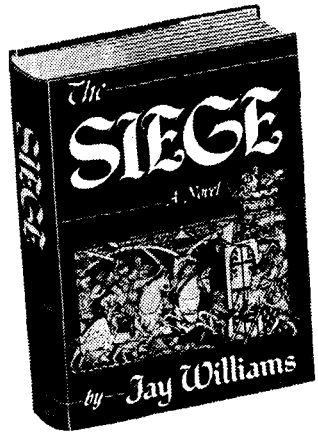

THE SIEGE
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Continued from page 25

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Commercials may be inserted in programs at the beginning, the end, and at "natural breaks." This phrase promises to rival for ambiguity the celebrated "in the public interest, convenience, and necessity" of our own Federal Communications Act. What will be a "natural break" in British commercial television? The ITA, already queried on this point, has ruled that two curtains in a three-act play constitute two natural breaks. Is the end of each round in prizefight a natural break? No. How about a knockout? Yes.

WITH only nine months (from starting gun to air time) for the ITA to tool up, commercial TV in Britain is having a lively time getting original products. Theatres, barns, and cellars are sprouting television production companies. London is filled with American film-peddlers. The British Actors Equity, fearful that the ITA channel will be flooded with canned American programs, has threatened no cooperation unless there is a home protection embargo. There will be one, it appears. Only 20 per cent of the ITA output may be foreign product. A lot of it will be film from behind the Iron Curtain. Not all of the foreign film will be run at peak periods: much will be spread through the day.

The men who are fashioning British commercial television are the program contractors. There are four companies at present who have received the original franchises. Eventually there may be as many as fourteen program contractors. The first four are Associated Rediffusion, Associated Broadcasting, Granada Theatres, and the Maurice Winnick group. The last was formerly backed by Lord Kemsley, but it may now be looking for new financial backing—the Kemsley interests were reported to have withdrawn as this issue was going to press. Associated Rediffusion is a combination of the Rothermere publishing interests (the *Daily Mail*)

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and a big financial group (Drayton). Associated Broadcasting has important theatrical money behind Norman Collins, former head of the BBC. Maurice Winnick is the ex-band-leader impresario who turned American radio-TV people green with envy when he came over here several years ago, bought up the TV rights to such popular quiz shows as "What's My Line?" "Down You Go," and "Twenty Questions," and sold them at a fancy profit to the BBC. Lord Kemsley owns the *Daily Telegraph*. His partner, before the two men withdrew their support from Mr. Winnick, was Isaac Wolfson, England's furniture king.

Granada Theatres is singly owned by Sidney Bernstein, who singly owns the biggest British circuit of independent cinemas, sixty-five in the south of England. Harry Watt, his representative, now shopping for products in the United States and Canada, is a former film director, "bored with the movies, taking a flyer in the new medium." The pioneer program contractors admit they have an enormous amount to learn from American TV, says Mr. Watt; but they are taking their social responsibility fairly seriously. They want to be popular, but they also want to put on opera and to teach people to paint. They are not kowtowing to the advertisers. They are eager to prove that a commercial TV basis is not necessarily a low TV basis. They know that the ITA has been set up as an extraordinary body of watchdogs, including doyens of education. Under the scrutiny of the Authority the program contractors mean to be box-office and alive, with broad mass appeal, but they propose not to "sell" themselves to the advertisers. "If we sell out—we fail."

THE real test may come later, when more program contractors enter the field; when there are three commercial TV channels instead of one; when the competition for audience will get rough. Some of the toughest competition may come, curiously enough, from the "old boys," the intellectual highbrows of the BBC. They are accepting the ITA challenge with a playing field gleam in their eyes. To beat the lure of ITA money to the BBC staff the BBC has raised salaries, granted long-term contracts. Many of its big stars are staying, because with the income tax taking ninety-seven cents out of every dollar in the top brackets the bigger ITA money can't compete with the big publicity the BBC can give the stars.

If the program contractors mean to be mass without losing quality, the BBC is out to prove that it can keep quality without losing popularity. Sir George Barnes, television director of the BBC, has put it this way: "We in the BBC have the ability to fight. We have the will to fight. And we have the intention of competing. When I look at the assets on our side they are overwhelming. We already have the network. We have television available to 97 per cent of the population. We have a technical staff which has never been more self-confident, and we have what I consider to be the best television staff in the world."

Will the ITA middlebrows capture Britain's lowbrows from the BBC highbrows? Tune in ten years from now and find out. Meanwhile it all adds up to fine excitement. Oh, to be in England now that ITA is here! Perhaps we may at long last find the answer to the ancient riddle wrapped in an enigma hidden in a mystery, to wit, "Is there really a Gresham's Law in broadcasting? Does the bad truly drive out the good, when both are well heeled with capital?" Would that this kind of Battle for Britain were being fought in America, too!

—ROBERT LEWIS SHAYON.

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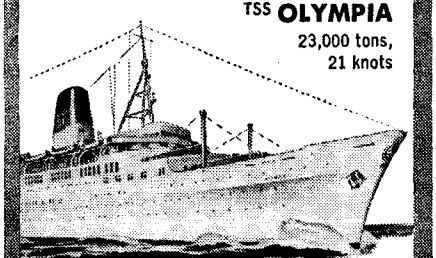

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WE WERE sitting in the Dog and Duck, my friend Harry Cope and I, having what Harry likes to call "a couple of bevvies." "Harry," I began, "you, the lexicographer of Cheapside, the etymologist of cockney backslang, are you aware of what is being celebrated in the year 1955?"

"Core," said Harry, scratching his head through his tweed cap. "The twenty-third anniversary of me wedding to me Storm and Strife, the departure of Winnie from 10 Downing Street, God love 'im, and the twenty-ninth birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth."

"All those are anniversaries indeed," I told him. "But you, Harry, the arbiter of the patois spoken by all those born within sound of the bells of St. Mary le Bow, you don't know? I thought you lexicographers stuck together. Perhaps you haven't been reading the paper."

"I read me linen draper morning and night," said Harry with some indignation. Then a light shone across his eyes. "You're not," he said with a pause, "you're not referring to . . . to that other lexicographer?"

"Indeed I am," I answered, "for if there is one man to whom we should raise our glasses it is to Dr. Samuel Johnson, who 200 years ago published his famous dictionary of English words."

"Dr. Johnson," said Harry swallowing some beer. "'E 'ad a Jem Mace would stop a clock, 'e did."

"I know he wasn't much to look at," I said, "but you have to admit there was much that he did to standardize the English language. You have him to thank that there is no language barrier between us today. Who was Jem Mace?"

"Crikey," said Harry, "Jem Mace was a boxer, but 'is name'll live forever. In cockney backslang that's short for face."

"I admit," I said, "that his Jem Mace was not the Jem Mace of Miss

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Eva Gabor, but I have heard that in the top floor of his house on Gough Street he spent ten years working on this dictionary, and it is a great debt we owe, such littérateurs as you and me."

"Core," said Harry, "'is I-suppose spread from ear to ear. And 'is bonnet fair. Big and bushy it was, like a lady's. He wore the strangest whistle and flute you ever saw. 'is round-the-housers stopped short at the knee and 'is almond rocks came up from his daisy roots for a rendevoo at the joint. Crikey," said Harry, taking out his handkerchief and blowing mightily on his I-suppose.

"Still," I said, "it is only fitting that here, Anno Domini 1955, men of letters should pay their respects. I propose a pilgrimage."

"You mean," said Harry, "you want to toddle off down the frog and toad and visit his Mickey Mouse?"

"I hear," I said, "that his residence on Gough Street is a repository of Johnsonian lore."

"You are a guest in my country," said Harry with sudden grandiloquence. "Let us not tarry further in this rub-a-dub. Let's hail a flounder and dab and 'ave us a butcher's hook."

"Agreed," I said. "You are a man of perspicacity," and reaching in my pocket I drew forth a dollar to pay for the bevvies.

"Put away the caisser, the Oxford scholar," said Harry, eying the dollar. "Bert," he said, summoning the bartender and dropping two half-crowns on the table. "'ere's two toscheroos, and don't forget the wally range."

"Let's see," said Bert, casting an appraising butcher's hook at my glass of Guinness. "Your friend 'ad a Lady Innes, and what'd you 'ave, 'arry?"

"A pig's ear," said 'arry draining his beer. He handed me my hat. "'Ere's your tit for tat," he said, "let's scarper."

"This 'ere's Fleet Street," Harry said, as we neared our destination, "where all the linen drapers are published." The cab pulled into Gough Square, and paused in front of Number One. A sign said "Association of Correctors of the Press." "Copy-readers in other words," explained Harry. "Now which is the doctor's Mickey Mouse? Ah," he said spying a bobbie on the corner, "dekko that flattie over there. I'll ask 'im."

He was back in a minute. "Eno nevess," he said. "Seventeen."

"You have numbers in backslang, too?" I asked the lexicographer of the costermongers. "M'lord," said Harry, "we have all the numbers from eno to net," and forthwith he counted off for me, "Eno, owt, earth, ruof, evif, exis, nevess, tee aitch, enen,

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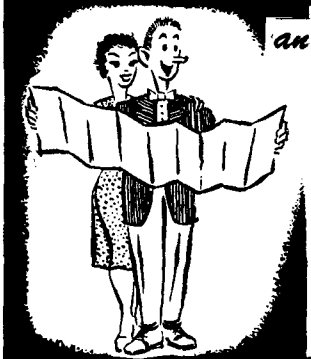

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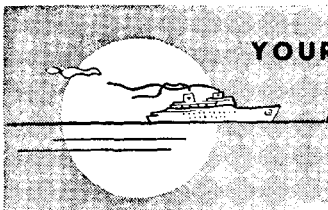

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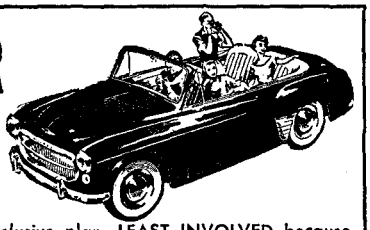

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net. Well, this is 'is Mickey Mouse. Let's go in."

I bought a small guide, and as we moved about I quoted from it liberally. "Dr. Johnson lived in this house for eleven years," I told him.

"Nevel years in one Mickey Mouse," said Harry, whistling low. He looked at the flight of stairs. "What's up the apple 'n pears?"

AS WE climbed the steps I read aloud. "The house was given to the nation in 1915, at which time Sir Max Beerbohm presented a cartoon depicting a conversation which Boswell might have had with Dr. Johnson when the doctor was notified that his house was to be placed on public view." We found the Beerbohm cartoon on the second floor. Harry stood before it squinting and fishing in his coat pockets.

"What's it say?" he asked, "H'ive left me specs in me other Quaker Oat."

"Well, it goes like this:

BOSWELL: Are you not pleased, Sir, that your house in Gough Square is to be presented to the nation?

JOHNSON: Why no, Sir. You are to consider that the purpose of a house is to be inhabited by someone. If a house be not fit for tenancy by Tom or Dick, let it be demolished or handed over without more ado, to those rats which by frequentation will have acquired a prescriptive right there. I conceive that in Gough Square a vast number of rats will have been disturbed and evicted (puffing and rolling himself from side to side). Sir, I am sorry for the rats. Sir, the rats have a just grievance.

BOSWELL: Nevertheless, Sir, is it not well that the house of the great Samuel Johnson be preserved. Will it not tend to diffuse happiness and to promote virtue?

JOHNSON: Nay, Sir, let us have no more of this foppishness. The house is nought. Let us not sublimify lath and plaster. I know not whether I profited the world whilst I was in it. I am very sure that my mere tenement will not be profitable now that I am out of it. Alas, Sir, when *tempus edax* has swallowed the yoke of the egg there is no gain to be had by conservation of the eggshell.

"Crikey," said Harry. "No wonder he had to write a dictionary."

We climbed to the top floor where it was written. It proved to be a simple garret room.

"He got over £1,500 for the job," I said, looking at the guidebook.

"Three monkeys for writing a dictionary," said Harry.

"Carlyle said, 'It may be called the

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best of all dictionaries,' but look what he wrote in it." I read Harry some of the definitions:

CHICKEN: "A term for a young girl."

JOB: "A low word now much in use of which I cannot tell the etymology."

LEXICOGRAPHER: "A harmless drudge that busies himself in tracing the original, and detailing the significance of words."

"Well, now," said Harry, bristling somewhat. "He needn't of said *that*."

"Don't take offense, Harry," I told him. "You know what he once said about Americans? He said, 'I am willing to love all mankind except an American: they are a race of convicts and ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging'."

"Let's go to the nearest boozer and drink 'is ill health."

"No, Harry," I said, as we descended the apples and pears and walked out into the street, "let's go down to the Cheshire Cheese, which they say was Johnson's favorite boozer, and let us drink to his health. Remember it was Goldsmith who said, 'There is nothing of the bear about Johnson but his skin!' "

SO WE strolled down the frog and toad to Wine Office Court, where Goldsmith had walked, and Carlyle, Macaulay, Tennyson, and Dickens, and we looked at the sign in front of the Clarke Hall Bookshop that told about it.

"In that lollypop," said Harry, nodding towards the shop, "you can buy one of them Johnson dictionaries in four volumes. Just sixty quid, it is. Read about it in me linen draper."

"Let us forego the four volumes in favor of dinner," I suggested, and I steered Harry into the Cheshire Cheese.

"Righto," said Harry. "Me stomach says it's time for me Lilley and Skinner, but let's begin the proceedin's with a little bevvy. What'll it be?"

"Gin for me."

"Bartender, give us a needle and pin for the gent and a pint o' lace for me."

"A pint of lace?" I asked Harry.

"Lace Curtain," he explained, "that's Burton, finest pig's ear you can drink."

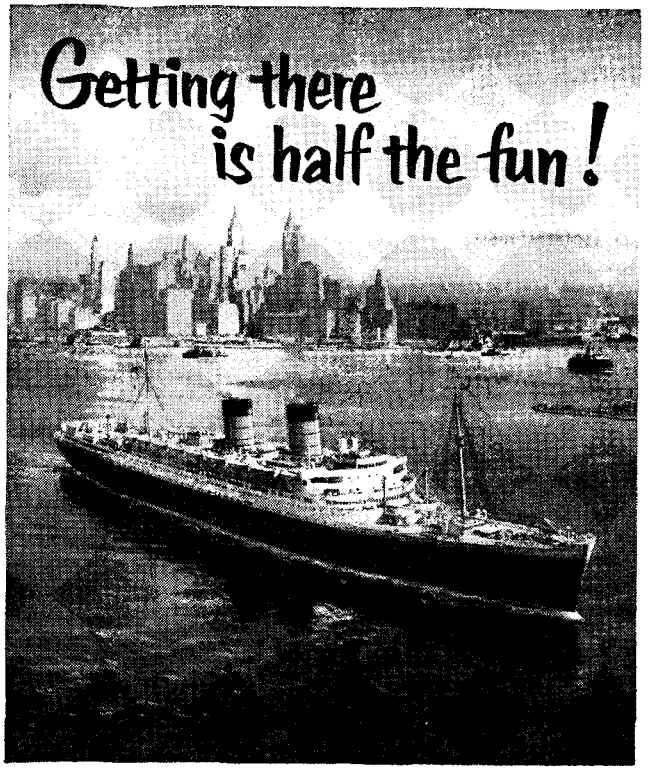
We took the glasses to the table and consulted the menu. "The specialty hasn't changed since Johnson's day. It's steak-and-kidney pie."

"Righto," said the etymologist of the costermongers, "but first to Dr. Johnson." He raised his glass.

"To lexicographers," I said.

"Waiter," said Harry putting down his beer, "bring us the cake and Sydney."

—HORACE SUTTON.



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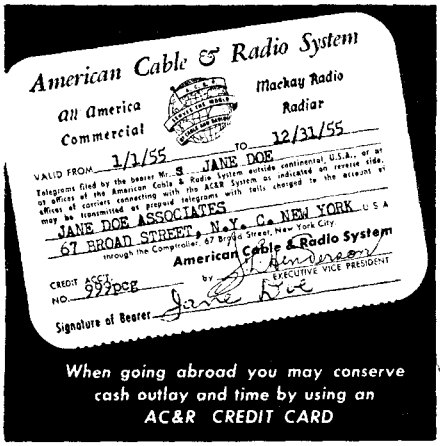

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Commerce in Ideas

Continued from page 18

worked, not only efficiently but imaginatively. The power of the idea has overcome all the inertias and all the frictions. Let me give a few facts and figures about the Fulbright Commission in the United Kingdom, and thus about the devoted men and women in both countries who have worked to make these facts and figures possible.

In an average year we bring about 225 professors and graduate students and research scholars to Great Britain and her colonies—about twenty to the colonies, although that number will increase. In an average year we send —which means we pay for the round-trip travel of—about 250 British professors and graduate students and research scholars to the United States—about fifteen from the colonies. We also help on the round-trip travel of a hundred school teachers, each way.

Since we are dealing in a blocked currency, and since we pay travel, tuition, and maintenance to the Americans, but only travel to the British, how can we send more people to America than we bring to England? The answer is in the interest and cooperation of the United States Government, under the Smith-Mundt Act, and of American universities, colleges, and private foundations. In other words, having made travel to America virtually impossible for British scholars we then busy ourselves to undo the impossibility. The worst thing in the world would be a government which was consistent.

One more word about the Fulbright Commission in the United Kingdom, which I take as my chief example because I know it well. A few years ago we got permission to experiment with a five weeks' conference, in the summer, on American studies. We had first asked all the British universities and colleges whether this was needed, and their answer was an overwhelming Yes. Why was it needed? The same old reason: in our sad world men are not only restrained from traveling to see their American confrères: they cannot even buy the books, reports, and learned periodicals to keep them up to date on American studies. At the moment, when such studies are at last seen to be all important, they become all but impossible. Hence the enthusiasm for our plan to bring the American scholar to talk to and argue with his British friends, and to bring with him the precious books and monographs.

There was already an accumulating interest in American studies throughout Great Britain, so these confer-

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ences have served a true need, and at the right time. With financial help from the Rockefeller Foundation, providing the "dollar support" which we who deal in blocked sterling cannot provide, the conferences have been held in three successive years, and there will be a fourth one this coming summer at University College, Oxford. Best of all, British dons are now organizing a committee of their own, to take over the conferences and to assure if possible that they will become a permanent institution.

SO MUCH for the Fulbright Commission, which is far from being the only body in this field. Let me list some of the other agencies which are cutting refreshing holes in our carefully built Curtain. I have mentioned the exchange of teachers from secondary schools. We all know about the seventy-four Rhodes Scholars who cause such anguish to the *Chicago Tribune*. The Marshall Foundation, with funds raised in Great Britain, brings twelve more American scholars to the United Kingdom each year. The Rotary International brings another twenty-five.

And in reverse, the English-Speaking Union provides fellowships and grants for sixty-nine Englishmen to study in the United States. And the Union in America has just raised money, as a memorial to King George VI, to bring twenty-six graduates annually, from the technical schools and colleges of Britain, to study in our technical schools at home. Happy days, when the Americans can raise a fund to commemorate a King George of England!

In addition to the twenty-five mentioned above, the Rotary International also sends ten English scholars a year to our shores. And the Commonwealth Fund provides fellowships for another forty-eight. And the British-American Associates send lecturers to the United States with a grueling program of transcontinental speaking, and bring lecturers from the United States who have equally abundant and important engagements throughout Great Britain.

This is only a partial list. I could mention the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Henry Fellowships, and many others. But I have said enough to show the scale on which we are all trying to promote the commerce in ideas and men between the two nations. I need not emphasize the vital necessity of such commerce, for us and perhaps for all mankind. The same weapons which have frightened us into closing so many doors have made it more than ever important that we all work to keep the doors wide open.

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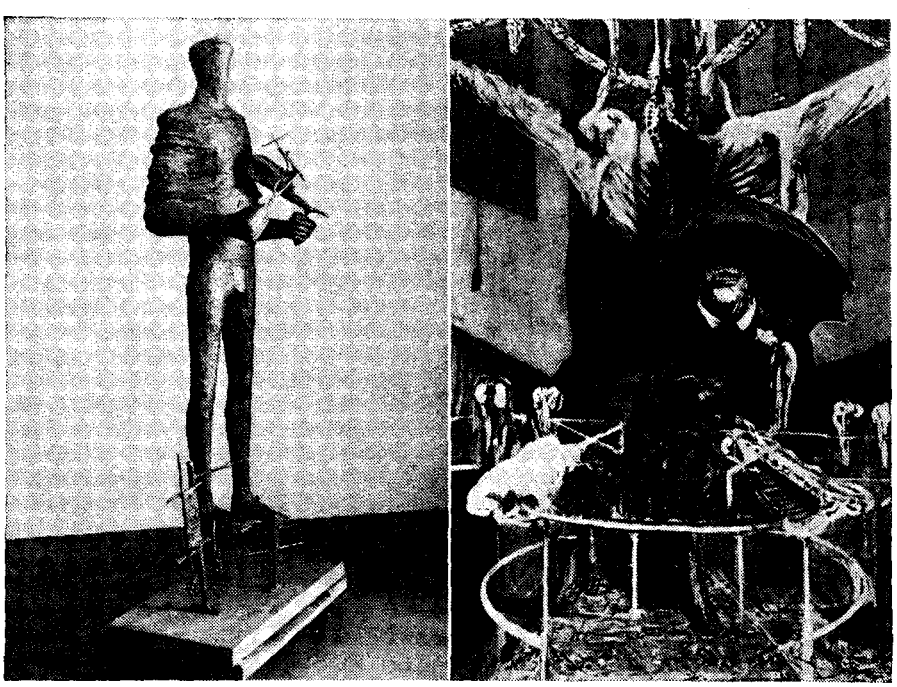
THE FINE ARTS

REG BUTLER AND FRANCIS BACON

IT IS A remarkable fact that England, after her bitter travail and isolation during the recent war, should now be producing artists of considerable fame and some influence abroad. Indeed, not since the early nineteenth century, when the French Romantics Géricault and Delacroix returned from their trips to London enthused by certain works they had seen, has English art been so respected a force in foreign lands. In 1952, for example, at the Venice Biennial Exposition—Europe's most important recurrent exhibition of modern art—the British pavilion, displaying Graham Sutherland's pictures and the sculpture of the younger Englishmen, caused a sensation. That same year Ben Nicholson, a stalwart of abstract art in Britain, won first prize at the Carnegie International in Pittsburgh. Today the leading figures in strictly contemporary English painting and sculpture are shown in New York as often and successfully as the French members of the postwar generation. Whereas once London was in no sense a rival marketplace to Paris, now a number of astute collectors and museum curators, chiefly American, Swiss, Italian, and German, keep a sharp eye on developments across the Channel. Even the French are more respectful than they have been since Romanticism's collapse, though only recently one of the best young Parisian artists, speaking of a British colleague, asked me incredulously: "How can you believe this man is a painter? He is *English*!"

THERE are a number of reasons why contemporary British art has gained in international esteem. One is the sheer talent of Henry Moore, who proved to an astonished art world that the grandson of a Yorkshire coalminer deserved to rank among the finest sculptors of his time. Another, still-underestimated factor, as William Gaunt has pointed out lately in *Arts Digest*, is that Paris's surrealist movement had a liberating effect on British artists at the time of the big London exhibition of 1936. The English for the most part had been uncomfortable with the formalism of the great abstract movements like cubism. Surrealism, on the other hand, seemed to open new vistas for British artists; it touched old chords of native, creative eccentricity (Blake and Turner); and it helped revive interest in the rather fantastic naturalism of such painters from Britain's past as James Ward and, above all, Samuel Palmer. I suppose modern English painters like Graham Sutherland and Francis Bacon might have developed their idiosyncratic styles without surrealism's example, but certainly their progress would have been slower.

I'll come back to Bacon in a mo-



—*Collection Museum of Modern Art.*

Butler's "Manipulator" and Bacon's "Painting" rival the Latins.

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ment. But first there is the paradoxical nature of contemporary British sculpture to be considered. One might have expected the best younger sculptors in England to be disciples of Henry Moore, in view of his gifts and eminence. On the contrary, a group of sculptors that includes Reg Butler, Kenneth Armitage, Lynn Chadwick, and Edouardo Paolozzi has appeared, owing little to Moore, but working with conviction and amazing technical proficiency in directions quite separate from his. Unlike Moore, to whom the dogma "truth to material" (*i.e.*, exploiting the intrinsic character of stone or wood) once meant a good deal, the newer men have felt free to weld, cast, gouge, and even tint their works solely as they have been so inspired.

OF THESE men the best-known, ever since he won London's international competition for a monument to the Unknown Political Prisoner, is Reg Butler, born in 1913. And properly thought of as the leader of the new group. For Butler is richly inventive, an artist of decided originality, whose "Manipulator" of 1954 (see illustration) seems to me to be one of the most powerful and lyric achievements of the postwar generation of sculptors, here and in Europe. From the evidence of this figure, it is apparent that Butler is turning away from the "constructions" in wire, iron, and bronze which once engrossed him, and is evolving a fresh kind of monumentality from the traditional, life-size bronze casting. Butler's figures, however, are usually accompanied by accessories which suggest metaphysical tumult rather than classical serenity, as when St. Catherine strains against her martyr's wheel. The words of the distinguished English painter, critic, and collector Roland Penrose are apropos: "Reg Butler patiently and dramatically invites us to explore our human structure and condition. The originality of his work lies more than anywhere in his ability to link the inner experience of life with the outer world of fact. This human frame, our palace or our prison, is not only the seat of our joys and torments but is also the victim of vicissitudes from without. Thanks to his acute sense of tensions and resistances, material in this artist's hands becomes endowed with an emotional image of the structure of life."

Born in 1910, and hence three years older than Butler, Francis Bacon did not begin to paint steadily until around 1945, when he was in his mid-thirties. At that time he showed some influence from Graham Sutherland, particularly in his use of lurid, sulphurous colors, and obviously he had looked hard at certain Picassos of

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the late 1930s and early 1940s in which a raging, distortional fantasy makes itself felt. Then with startling abruptness Bacon began to create a chimerical imagery for which no parallels can be found in the art of the present or the past. His most celebrated picture of the mid-1940s depicts a monstrous figure with gaping mouth, standing with an umbrella behind a cagelike structure with microphones, before a large, hanging carcass. This is an image of contemporary horror, and it is significant that Bacon amasses in his studio photographs of our era's dramatic events, historical (Goebbels screaming into a microphone) or domestic (auto accidents, scenes of crime and violence). The photographs apparently act as stimulants to an extraordinarily sensitive imagination lacerated by the world's perversity. Yet in Bacon's paintings there is no trace of realistic journalism. He edits with a born painter's sense of relevant order, and factual references are recognizable only to those who know the photographs which have fascinated him.

Bacon works at lightning speed, usually on very big canvases. And then more often than not he destroys his pictures and begins again. His philosophy quite clearly is that art must be all or nothing, all at once, as quickly as possible. The philosophy fits in with Bacon's passion for gambling at Monte Carlo, where he customarily goes when he has finished and sold a canvas. I've no idea what system Bacon uses in betting against the house. We can be sure it is a reckless one, involving all the sums at his disposal and quick, instinctive decisions. His painting is achieved by a similar method, and is made possible by almost incredible technical gifts that bring to mind no less an artist than Velasquez, whose portrait of Pope Innocent X in the Doria Gallery at Rome has been paraphrased by Bacon in a series of pictures of a seated figure, its face contorted in a frightened and frightening grimace, as though this were Hitler or some other powerful hysteric shown in a moment of disastrous exaltation and rage. Bacon is able to convey a comparable sense of oppression and foreboding in his picture of a dog slinking across a pavement or highway. The mysterious horror of his paintings is heightened by the spellbinding richness of his pigment, and even the squeamish do not easily turn away.

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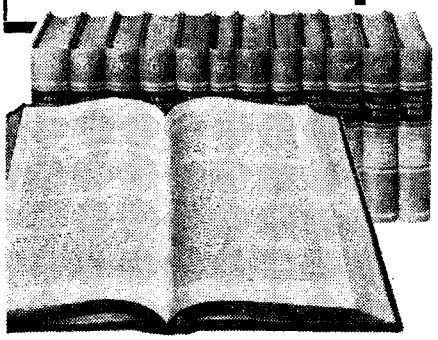

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The Writer's Life

Continued from page 21

English provincial town. Until we have booksellers who love books we cannot get the publishers into a stronger position.

The best advice I could give a British author would be to cut down on his basic living expenses, to try a cottage in the country and save up everything for expeditions into milieus as different as possible from his own; but then he needs a car, and it is symptomatic how very few authors can afford one. I am also inclined to think that the most interesting subjects for a writer are to be found outside this country, where life is too well reported and too closely covered by a network of documentation.

One of the most depressing landscapes in Europe is the forest of the Landes around Bordeaux, where for many miles the pine trees are hung with tin cups in which the resin drips from gashes in their sides. The trees are dusty and stunted, their crown unspread, their habit miserable; they are like the reviewers and men of letters and broadcasters and explainers and teachers and editors and publishers who pullulate in England today. Hacks in hacks' clothing, we drip our resin into shiny magazines and bakelite microphones until we bleed to death and reach the dreaded moment in later life when we discover *that one can do everything with fame* but eat it.

To SUM up: The economic condition of British writers is depressing but not desperate. There is little to tempt those who are ambitious of more than a quiet reputation, nor have ten years of peace, as in America, improved our prospects. It is not that we are poorer. Perhaps, despite our thousand-year-old culture, we are now more philistine. I would like to see all currency regulations removed for writers, books regarded as capital not income, and only journalism and lectures subject to tax, and, above all, a renaissance of the cult of the book itself, with more book exhibitions and larger literary prizes, for we need an improvement of the status of authorship. And I would like to see the pine wood spread its broad umbrella far from the Inland resin slashers, sheltering a flock of scuttering quail in the sunny undergrowth, and in due season letting fall its ripe nutty cones, the *pommes du pin*, provision against the winter months and ancient symbol of hospitality.

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The Muse

Continued from page 25

inklings and wrinkling strings of ice." But he has a way of his own in the irony of "Neither Here nor There" and the clear-cut fantasy of "Christ Walking on the Water." There is a kinship between Rodgers and George Barker. Although the styles of the two men differ in detail, both delight in a leaping language, both like to fuse the sublime and the banal. More than most poets of his generation Barker marks a return to lyricism.

THREE other unaffiliated poets are beginning to attract attention in this country. The first, Kathleen Raine, is with the exception of Edith Sitwell and Sylvia Townsend Warner the best woman poet in England today. While her technique is brightly modern, the spirit is darkly metaphysical, musing, and almost morbidly sensitive. Norman Nicholson is a self-contained curiosity, a throwback to the Georgians—with a difference. Unlike the theatrically pastoral bards of the Twenties, Nicholson has a true, even primitive, veneration for the land. His verse is peaceful, but beneath the calm surface there is a recognition of the demands of a roughly encroaching world and the fact that "the war begun in heaven still goes on." Sidney Keyes, who has been called a latter-day unromantic Rupert Brooke, was killed in World War II before he was twenty-one. A startingly fecund genius, Keyes published two books of symbolic and dramatically macabre work before his premature death; Herbert Reed considered him "the subtlest, the truest, the most open representative of a generation we have yet to welcome and understand."

A comparison between recent British and American poetry indicates that the English wear their scholarship more lightly and take (or reject) tradition with greater *savoir faire*. The techniques of our colleagues overseas seem a little smoother, the classic allusions a little subtler, and the frames of reference a little less obtrusive than our own. The tendency in both countries, however, is for further complexes of imagery, a concentration on timbres, more intensive studies of texture, and continuing emphasis on structure and sensibility.

The diversity of the poets cited in this compressed summary is a proof of vitality and indicates that their very differences express the varied, often contradictory, but authentic voices of their day.

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TUILAUVENT, Maple Road, Brewster, N. Y., 9-3154. Enjoy again the friendly informal home atmosphere. No planned activities, relaxation in beautiful countryside 50 miles from New York. Ideal for weekends and vacations. Attractive rooms. French cooking. Moderate rates.

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TRANQUIL, comfortable living in spectacular Mt. Rainier country. Ride, fish, or do nothing. Fifteen guests. Rates on request. DOUBLE K MOUNTAIN RANCH, Goose Prairie, Washington.

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WRITE, RELAX, ENJOY LIFE in tranquil fishing village on Olympic Peninsula one hour from Seattle. Comfortable family house on beautiful Puget Sound beach. Contact Dr. John Bell, 300 Homer, Palo Alto, California.

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STONEGATE LODGE on Long Lake, N. Y. Informal resort estate. Adirondack splendor. Concert trio, folk dancing, crafts, fishing. CIrcle 6-6386.

MUSIC INN is open, too, in June. Breakfast in bed if you like . . . June special.

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KINGSLEY DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 1102

Reg. U.S. Patent Office

By Doris Nash Wortman

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. Agricultural.	43 120 158 89 9 112 68 52
B. Actor.	12 144 105 81 147 16 178 128
C. Mixture of lime with shells, etc., used in warm climates for building.	161 83 180 123 61
D. Archaic word for friends, in familiar modern phrase.	126 70 121 173
E. Shakespeare asked whether "Fancy" were bred there (3 wds.).	106 169 17 36 176 109 42 86 94
F. Any half-breed (West Indies; India).	54 104 20 37 63 78
G. Equipped with a gate that permits ingress or egress but not both.	184 27 75 10 114 57 166
H. Early founder of Guilford, Conn., who served as governor of the colony (1676-83).	97 93 40 8 88
I. In reverse order (3 wds.).	100 164 48 179 1 51 67 103 19
J. Egg-laying animals.	76 2 50 118 165 159 73
K. Useless.	53 141 149 135 167 157 80 21 181 62 195 111
L. A certain photographic negative print.	155 124 35 119 113 45 160 56 85
M. Tools for trimming a wood surface.	127 170 190 150 55

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
N. Jaws of animals having well-developed beaks.	5 91 15 192 154 39 60 136 172
O. Led into bondage.	24 34 30 133 194 87 183 129
P. Perches.	151 65 125 122 69 7
Q. Detached.	115 71 153 186 171 98 3 46
R. Science of reflected sounds, or echoes.	82 185 101 168 138 6 14 25 108 29 49 116
S. Real surname of Voltaire.	31 66 33 102 191 131
T. Figuratively, perception, acuteness.	84 143 130 59 177 189 96
U. Having the iris of light color.	175 99 44 74 134 92
V. Hebrew prophet who succeeded Elijah.	13 90 132 182 193 137
W. Followers of 17th-cent. Jacob Amen.	95 26 195 188 139
X. Stealing, in the broadest sense, including swindling and embezzlement.	23 72 110 64 11
Y. Wholly solid; said of the aneroid barometer.	117 38 187 174 146 152 47 4 140 58
Z. Fifteenth-cent. English equivalent of the modern "man in the street."	18 77 156 163 28 32 22 107
Z¹. A thoroughly objectionable person.	41 162 142 145 148 79

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd WORDS, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. Alongside each definition, there is a row of dashes—one for each letter in the required word. When you have guessed a word, write it on the dashes, and also write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. . . . When the squares are all filled in, you will find that you have completed a quotation from some published work. If read up and down, the letters in the diagram have no meaning. . . . Black squares indicate ends of words; if there is no black square at the right side of the diagram, the word carries over to the next line. . . . When all the WORDS are filled in, their initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Of great help to the solver are this acrostic feature and the relative shapes of words in the diagram as they develop. Authority for spellings and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition.

							1 I	2 J	3 Q	4 Y		5 N	6 R	7 P	8 H		9 A	10 G							
11 X	12 B	13 V			14 R	15 N	16 B	17 E	18 Z	19 I		20 F	21 K	22 Z	23 X	24 O	25 R							
26 W	27 G	28 Z			29 R	30 O		31 S		32 Z	33 S	34 O	35 L	36 E		37 F	38 Y							
39 N	40 H			41 Z¹	42 E	43 A	44 U	45 L	46 Q	47 Y	48 I		49 R	50 J	51 I	52 A	53 K	54 F						
55 M	56 L	57 G	58 Y	59 T	60 N	61 C			62 K	63 F	64 X	65 P	66 S	67 I		68 A	69 P							
70 D	71 Q		72 X	73 J	74 U	75 G			76 J	77 Z	78 F	79 Z¹		80 K	81 B		82 R	83 C						
84 T		85 L	86 E	87 O	88 H			89 A	90 V	91 N	92 U	93 H	94 E		95 W	96 T	97 H							
98 Q	99 U	100 I		101 R	102 S	103 I	104 F	105 B		106 E	107 Z		108 R	109 E	110 X		111 K							
112 A	113 L	114 G	115 Q	116 R	117 Y		118 J	119 L	120 A	121 D	122 P		123 C	124 L	125 P	126 D								
127 M	128 B	129 O		130 T	131 S	132 V	133 O	134 U		135 K	136 N	137 V	138 R	139 W		140 Y	141 K							
142 Z¹	143 T		144 B	145 Z¹	146 Y		147 B	148 Z¹	149 K	150 M	151 P	152 Y	153 Q	154 N	155 L	156 Z								
157 K	158 A	159 J		160 L		161 C	162 Z¹	163 Z	164 I	165 J	166 G	167 K		168 R	169 E	170 M								
171 Q		172 N	173 D	174 Y	175 U	176 E	177 T		178 B	179 I		180 C	181 K	182 V	183 O	184 G	185 R							
186 Q	187 Y	—	188 W	189 T	190 M	191 S	192 N		193 V	194 O	195 W	196 K												

Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 10 of this issue.

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